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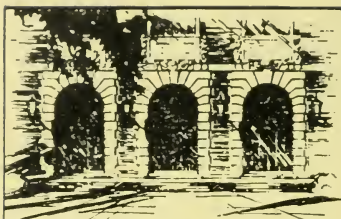
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THE BANDIT'S BRIDE.



A ROMANCE.



Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-street.



THE
BANDIT'S BRIDE;

OR,

THE MAID OF SAXONY.

A Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF *MONTBRASIL ABBEY*, &c.

Thou hast torn me
From the dear arms of my lamenting friends,
From my soul's peace, and from my injur'd love,
* * * * *
And driv'n me to the brink of black despair.

ROWE.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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THE

BANDIT'S BRIDE.

CHAP. I.

A FEW hundred yards above the favourite seat of Rosalthe, upon the edge of a tremendous precipice, stood the little hermitage of Father Anselmo. He was the confessor to the convent of St. Florensia—the friend, the exhorter, the physician, to the surrounding peasantry ; thither would the infirm repair to gain strength by his skill—the good would imbibe his doctrine—the wicked, listen and repent.

VOL. II.

B

His

His dwelling consisted of a refectory, two chambers, and a small chapel; a crucifix hung over the door, inviting the wearied passenger; from which, to the path that wound round the rock, a wooden bridge was thrown over a frightful chasm, whose base was lost in distance. The hollow sound of a foaming cataract reached the ear, whilst the overhanging rocks, covered with wild lavender, thyme, rosemary, and the mountain-ranunculas, seemed to shake, as though the approaching moment would precipitate them into the abyss. The tall cypress, the majestic linden, and far-spreading chestnut, sheltered the hermitage from the scorching rays of the sun; but though their luxuriance added to its beauty, they encreased, in boisterous weather, the danger of the devotee; for often the fury of the wind would tear off their heavy boughs, and blow them about his dwelling.

On the south side of the cell, a little spot, cultivated with the nicest care, was enclosed

enclosed by a hedge of myrtle and eglantine ; a clear fountain, placed by nature, watered the garden, where herbs, roots, and flowers, for his own, and the use of his laboratory, flourished in wild order. Thither would Rosalthe, during her visits to the cottage, repair, and listen to the sage counsels of Father Anselmo. Sometimes, from the garden, she would gaze, with awe and admiration, upon the wonders of creation ; sometimes take sketches of the sublime prospect, to present to the excellent Agatha.

A few evenings previous to her return to the convent, she quitted the cottage to visit the venerable recluse : breathless with the exertion of climbing the steep and craggy rock, she paused upon the bridge, and looked down upon the surrounding scenery, mellowed by the rays of a setting sun—the white waves of the Baltic sparkled in its golden beams, whilst the swift-sailing bark skimmed lightly on the surface. On
B 2 the

the opposite side, rich cultivated fields, and sombre forests, formed striking contrasts to the horror of perpendicular precipices, and cone-shaped mountains.

The door of the hermitage was closed, but Rosalthe gently knocking, it was opened by Father Anselmo, who received her with cheerfulness and affability.

“Welcome, my daughter,” he said, giving her a seat; “I have just returned from visiting the Lady Abbess of St. Florensia, who anxiously wishes the period of your return.”

“How is our holy mother?” eagerly asked Rosalthe. “I saw her yesterday, and methought an unusual depression hung upon her spirits.”

“She is well, my child,” replied the hermit, “but the remembrance of past misfortunes, encreased by the solitude of her dwelling, frequently occasions melancholy.”

“If

“ If St. Florensia is a solitude,” mildly enquired Rosalthe, “ how can you, Reverend Father, exist in this dreary abode, constantly exposed to storms and tempests?”

“ Alas ! my daughter,” replied the hermit, “ my life, and the life of the Abbess of St. Florensia, must not be compared ; her sufferings originate in the sins of others, mine from my own guilt and misconduct. It was not for indulgence that I chose this cell, but as a retirement suited for repentance ; here I can acknowledge my sins to my Creator, and by abstinence and prayer strive to merit mercy. My story, though a melancholy one, may prove instructive ; it may point out the consequences of error, and deter the young and inexperienced from treading in the same steps. I will relate it——

“ I was the eldest son of the best of fathers, born to opulence and respectability ; but my wayward disposition changed the

colour of my fate, and made me sinful and wretched. I had a brother," said the hermit, shuddering ; " that brother was a year younger than myself—he imbibed the wish of seeking fortune and happiness in a foreign land—my father sought to change the bent of his inclinations, but finding the attempt fruitless, at length yielded, with heart-felt sorrow. He was entrusted to the care of an intimate friend, and at an early age he embarked for India.

" I will pass over the uninteresting details of infancy, and arrive at the age of twenty-one, when the vicissitudes of my life commenced ; 'twas then that my uncurbed passions refused controul—'twas then that I followed the not unbeaten tract to misery—'twas then that I formed an intimacy with a set of men, thoughtless and self-willed as myself: they laughed at every species of advice, and encouraged me, by example and precept, to plunge into the destructive vortex of dissipation. My fond father attributed my errors to the
vivacity

vivacity of my disposition, and flattered himself that I should be reclaimed by patient expostulation; but, alas! I wanted firmness to resist those allurements, whose fatal tendency he sought to point out; and like one carried away by an impetuous torrent, was drawn to the gaming-table, where I soon felt the want of money—my debt encreased—grown desperate, I doubled the stake, but lost all I played for. I was now incessantly harassed by importunate demands; terrified at a step quicker than usual, or at the opening of the door, I lived in perpetual terror. It was in vain to conceal my situation from the knowledge of my father; he heard it with horror, and declared that his fortune could not support such extravagance. His affection involved him in difficulties, and his health and spirits sunk beneath the blow aimed by an ungrateful son.

“I saw him die—I witnessed his last struggles,” continued Father Anselmo, as

the tears chased each other down his cheek. "At the moment, I vowed to alter my way of living—to return to the paths of virtue; but my promises were futile, and my heart was reserved for a greater calamity. In a few weeks I forgot the vows I had made on the grave of my father, and hastening to Vienna, again returned to my former associates. My patrimony was again squandered among sharpers; and one night—a night of horror—a night never to be obliterated from my memory—heated with wine, and exasperated at my ill fortune, I quarrelled with a gentleman who had been but a few minutes in the room. The dispute rose high, we drew our swords, and in a second my adversary was disarmed and wounded. His eyes glared dreadfully upon me; his hand was pressed upon his side, and he groaned in the extreme of agony. It was my brother—my beloved—my ill-fated brother, whose days my guilty hand had shortened. He expired in the night, and I was arraigned for the murder.

“ I will

“ I will not attempt to paint the tortured and distracted state of my mind during my confinement: suffice it to say, that though the laws of man acquitted me of the crime, I felt condemned by the laws of God, and the dictates of my conscience. My career of guilt was closed—I no longer saw the world through the same medium—all nature was changed—the Heavens hung threatening over my head—the rocks, the woods, the waters, all looked darkened—every object seemed to point out the necessity of a long and painful penance.

“ I quitted Vienna, and hastening into Lower Saxony, entered a convent of Benedictine monks; after passing the period of my noviciate, I took the cowl, and obtained permission of the abbot to retire to this solitude; where, for forty years, I have strove, by abstinence and prayer, to obliterate the crimes of my past sinful and misguided life.”

The hermit ceased to speak, and Rosalthe thanking him for the narration, rose to depart, as the mists of evening already darkened the surrounding hills.

Father Anselmo, quitting her at the bridge, returned to his cell; while Rosalthe, reflecting on the various vicissitudes of his eventful life, pursued her way round the rock. She paused at her favourite cliff, for the moon's chaste beams played upon the unruffled bosom of the ocean, and the gentle zephyr wafted the plaintive notes of the nightingale from the close recesses of the forest; the soft dew on the flowers impregnated the air with their sweets, and the luminous glow-worm sparkled in the deep foliage. Whilst yet Rosalthe rested, the sound of approaching steps reached her ear; she listened, but they were lost in silence: attributing the whole to the illusions of fancy, she was about returning to the cottage, when an agitated sigh left her no room for doubt.

A deep blush suffused her countenance—the form of Adelbert rose to her imagination; she turned hastily round, and beheld—not the Count, but a figure no less perfect, features no less impressive: it was a stranger, whose ardent gaze rested on her; a rich mantle flowed from his shoulders, and a sable plume waved upon his forehead.

“Lady,” he said, gracefully bowing, “I have lost my way among the rocks, and would enquire the road to the hamlet?”

“Yon path to the left,” replied Rosalthe, “is that you seek; it winds through the forest, on the opposite side of which, in a deep vale, lies the village: but if you are fatigued, the distance may be too considerable. On the summit of this rock is the cell of Father Anselmo—thither repair, and you will obtain shelter for the night.”

“Thank you, fair maid,” said the stranger; “whilst I pace yon gloomy forest, I shall reflect upon my directress, and re-

member, with gratitude, the incident which unfolded to my admiring eyes the deity of this wilderness."

Rosalthe blushed, and modestly bowing, passed quickly on; as she came in sight of the cottage, she turned to see if the stranger had gained the right path, but he had not moved from the rock—he still stood upon an overhanging point, looking towards her, his arms folded on his breast, and his loose mantle floating in the breeze.

"Poor youth!" said Rosalthe, "he looked unhappy—he sighed, as though his heart would break—perhaps, like myself, he may be an orphan—perhaps, even more unfortunate—he may have no tender friend, like the Abbess of St. Florensia, to direct his inexperience—in the warmth of youth he may be led away, and for a short space of mistaken pleasure, pass, like Father Anselmo, whole years of penitence and remorse."

The

The Count met her at the garden-gate:—“Whither have you been?” he enquired, taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips. “I was going in search of you.”

Rosalthe's eyes sparkled with delight; the stranger, and his supposed sorrows, were alike forgotten:

“I have been to the cell of Father Anselmo,” she replied.

“And I have been at the chapel,” said Adelbert, “in the hope of meeting you at the broken altar.”

Rosalthe's looks betrayed disappointment.

“How unfortunate!” she exclaimed, “I wish I had gone there; last night I passed a full hour in the ruins.”

“And do you really wish you had been at the chapel?” eagerly enquired Adelbert.

“Indeed

“ Indeed I do,” replied Rosalthe.

“ Let us return then,” said the Count ;
“ in your society hours pass as moments.”

Rosalthe smiling, suffered him to lead her from the gate. Long and interesting was the silence ; Adelbert tenderly perused the features of Rosalthe, and read in them all that his fondest hopes could picture.

“ In a very few days,” at length said Rosalthe, with a sigh, “ I shall return to the solitude of my convent ; and these charming objects,” pointing to the surrounding scenery, “ will be shut from my view. “ Time has been,” she artlessly pursued, “ when St. Florensia was the seat of my happiness ; but now I feel strangely depressed, and dread the hour of my return, without knowing why.”

“ Charming simplicity !” inwardly whispered Adelbert, as his heart bounded at the solution he could have given. “ How often,

often, when you are absent, Rosalthe, shall I visit this chapel !” he answered, as they entered the ruin—“ How often will my thoughts dwell upon this interview !—How often will they wander to the silent cloisters of St. Florensia !”

Rosalthe sighed, and as her eyes rested on the ground, a tear trickled down her cheek.

“ And will your thoughts sometimes return to Lunenberg Castle ?” he enquired ; “ will they sometimes accompany me in my lonely rambles ?”

“ Yes, my Lord,” said Rosalthe, “ they ever rest with my friends ; I must have an ungrateful heart was I to forget their kindness ; and while I retain my memory, the hours I have passed at Lunenberg Castle will be marked as the happiest period in my life.—But it grows dark ; I fear my mother will be uneasy at my long absence—let us return.”—Stopping at the door of
the

the cottage—"Tell my beloved Angela," she exclaimed, "that I long to see her!"

"It is well you named my sister," interrupted Adelbert smiling; "mine is a treacherous memory—I was charged with many kind messages, and to say, that in the afternoon of to-morrow she will pay you a visit. The Baron and myself are to pass the day with a friend—would I could send Angela as my substitute—I envy even my sister the happiness of your society—but if I can possibly steal from the company, I will hasten to the retreat of innocence and beauty."

Rosalthe, smiling at his compliment, returned his salutation, and joined her foster parents in the parlour.

"How late you are, my dear child," said Agatha, as she entered; "sure you must be wet—the dew falls heavily, and you have but just crossed the plain."

"Late," repeated Rosalthe; "why, mother,

ther, I have been away but a very short time."

"*A very short time, indeed,*" replied the dame, archly.

"Come, come, Agatha," said Dusseldorf, "you forget when you used to stand at the gate, even when it was darker than it is now. I remember one night hurrying across the plain, and finding you there, though the rain was falling; and when I asked you what you was looking for, you told me the moon, though we both knew it was in its last quarter. Well, such things must be," continued the old man—"But see how I have painted Rosalthe's cheeks—Ah, my dear child, nature is better than all the fine colours used by the ladies of Vienna!"

In the morning, Agatha, and her little domestic, Ulrica, busied themselves in decorating the cottage for the arrival of the visitor; fresh flowers bloomed upon the mantle, and the golden clusters of the laburnum.

burnum hung over the polished bars of the grate. Ulrica was a destitute orphan, but she possessed sufficient recommendation to the heart of Agatha—good-nature and gratitude. She had already passed three happy years with the cottagers, the infirmities of old age having rendered the assistance of a servant necessary. Dusseldorf taught her to read, and took pains in improving a naturally good understanding.

Rosalthe, anxious to see her friend, hastened to her window, which commanded a view of the road leading to the castle. Whilst yet she stood at the open casement, she saw the stranger who had addressed her at the rock, slowly pass the cottage; he appeared lost in thought—his arms were folded, and his eyes were bent on the ground—suddenly he looked up, and beholding Rosalthe, mournfully bowed: distantly returning the salute, she retired from the window. Once more she ventured to look out; the tall figure of the
stranger

stranger was still visible ; his steps were directed to the forest, in which she soon lost sight of him.

The carriage of the Baron de Lunenberg now entered the plain ; Rosalthe flew to the garden-gate, and in a few moments pressed her friend to her heart. Angela smiled upon the assiduities of the good Agatha, and shook with cordial warmth the time-beaten hand of the supposed father of Rosalthe ; she admired the neatness of the little parlour, and partook of a repast, where good-nature and cheerfulness prevailed. But notwithstanding her care and condescension, the good old pair laboured under a restraint which they could not subdue ; in her they beheld the daughter of the Baron de Lunenberg—they were his tenants—they felt the disproportion of birth, and listened, with wonder and admiration, to the Lady Angela, who, in quick and lively sallies, sought to banish distinction.

“ Come,

“Come, Rosalthe,” she said, rising from the table, “let us walk to the cliff; I wish to see your favourite retreat, and the ivy-crowned ruins of the chapel, on which my brother passes so many encomiums.”

Rosalthe tied on her straw hat, and taking the arm of Angela, they quitted the cottage.

“We have had a sad accident at the castle this morning,” said Angela, as they ascended the rock; “my brother and——surely you are ill, Rosalthe—how pale you look—let us return.”

“An accident to your brother!” fearfully repeated Rosalthe, a deep blush for the moment succeeding the whiteness of her complexion.

“No! not to my brother,” answered Angela, “but to the Prince de Lobenstein.”

“Is that all?” exclaimed Rosalthe.

“Yes, *that is all!*” said Angela, fixing her

her penetrating eyes on the countenance of her friend. "But you interrupted my story.—As we were walking in the park this morning," continued Angela gravely, "the Prince, unfortunately, went too near the edge of a fountain—the ground gave way, and he slipped into the water — whilst the Baron and Adelbert were extricating his Highness from the bath, I was watching the terrified inhabitants of the pond, who all swam hastily to the other side. 'Oh, the poor little fish!' I exclaimed; 'see how you have frightened them.' The Baron frowned, Adelbert smiled, and the disconcerted Prince replied—'Say not poor, Lady Angela; they have obtained your pity, and are objects of envy.' But, Rosalthe, you pay no attention to what I am relating; when you have seen the Prince de Lobenstein, you will not be so indifferent—he is very handsome."

"Very, very handsome!" echoed Rosalthe.

"His

“ His countenance is expressive,” resumed Angela, “ and his eyes——”

“ Are as a mirror,” interrupted Rosalthe, “ in which his soul is reflected.”

“ And then his manners and conversation are so engaging,” again said Angela.

“ And his figure so elegant and commanding,” sighed Rosalthe.

“ *Elegant and commanding,*” repeated Angela, laughing, “ you surprise me ; of whom are you speaking ?”

“ Of—of——”

“ The Prince de Lobenstein ?” enquired Angela.

“ I never saw the Prince de Lobenstein in my life,” said Rosalthe.

“ Poor girl!—you are strangely altered,” resumed her tormenting friend ; “ methinks you would not be happy with Father Anselmo, and the sisters of St. Florensia now. Say Rosalthe,” she enquired archly, “ will you be a nun ?”

Rosalthe, blushing, hid her face ; she
knew

knew not from whence arose her emotion—she still felt the same reverence, the same affection for the abbess—still loved and esteemed the society—but the life of a nun, in her estimation, possessed not half the charms she had pictured a few weeks before—and as the recollection of her speedy return to the convent crossed her mind, a tear unchecked fell from her eye.

Oh, love!—dangerous, sweet delusion!—in what gay colours does the youthful fancy deck thee!—How rich with hope dost thou pourtray the future, and hide beneath thy budding roses the sharp and goading thorns!

From the rock they proceeded to the chapel, and from thence were returning to the cottage, when they met the Count on the plain; he looked unusually pensive, and scarcely spoke during the remainder of the walk. The carriage already waited
to

to conduct them to the castle; Angela took an affectionate leave of Rosalthe, and the Count, as he seized her hand, whispered —“ To-morrow evening, at eight o'clock, visit the ruined chapel; my life, nay more, my earthly happiness, depends upon the meeting !”

CHAP. II.

THE clock struck seven — Rosalthe eagerly watched its motion—in one short hour every doubt would be removed, and the parting words of Adelbert resolved.

“ *My life, nay more, my earthly happiness, depends upon the meeting !*” would she frequently exclaim, and then pause to wonder at their import ; every cause, save the right, was assigned, and at that her innocent heart could not guess.

At length the wished-for hour arrived ; she snatched her hat, and flew swiftly across

the plain : breathless she came in sight of the ruin—Adelbert was there, and hastened to meet her.

“ A thousand thanks, beloved Rosalthe !” he said, leading her into the chapel ; his countenance glowed with unusual brightness, his eyes beamed with unusual fire. “ The period so long wished for is arrived—concealment vanishes.”

Rosalthe looked doubtfully towards him.

“ Yes, loveliest and most adored of women, my heart can no longer struggle with its feelings ; its hopes, its fears, its wishes, shall all be laid open before you. Here, at the foot of the altar, in the sight of that Being from whom no secrets are hid, I swear never to yield to the force of prejudice—never, but with life, to renounce my expectations. Am I too sanguine ?—Say, Rosalthe, have I not deceived myself ?—You have honoured me with your esteem
—you

—you have thought me not unworthy your friendship—by a nearer, by a more endearing tie, may the contract be preserved?”

Rosalthe, pale, motionless, sunk trembling on the steps of the altar; surprise for a moment checked her utterance. To be beloved by Adelbert, to be the acknowledged mistress of his affections, was joy too great to bear—was joy bordering on agony. At length she exclaimed—“Gracious Heaven!—may I believe what I hear?—may I credit the reality of my senses?”

The Count knelt at her feet—“Rosalthe, beloved, adored Rosalthe,” he murmured, “will you receive the heart, the hand of your Adelbert?”

Instantly love's delusion fled; she remembered the supposed humbleness of her birth—she remembered the insuperable

bar which fate had placed between their union.

“ Alas !” she exclaimed, “ with what eyes will the Baron behold me, when he shall have heard that the daughter of his dependant, Dusseldorf, has been the author of his son’s swerving from the duty he owes him ?—Even now I tremble for the fatal consequences. Oh, my Lord, whilst yet in your power, escape the danger !—fly from me !—think of me no more !—let me not alienate from the most generous of my friends, the heart, the affections, of the most indulgent of parents.”

“ You alarm yourself with false fears,” replied Adelbert ; “ this night I will kneel at the feet of my father—I will awaken his feelings—I will recal the dream of past happiness—the virtues of my departed mother—I will tell him there exists a being no less perfect—I will tell him that being is Rosalthe—my proud spirit shall bend before

fore him—with prayers, with tears, I will solicit from his hands the blessing which my ardent soul pines after.”

“And should he reject those prayers,” enquired Rosalthe; “should he say a parent’s blessing shall never enrich your union, will you then relinquish the pursuit?—Will you submit to the decision?”

“No, never!” answered the Count, starting at the possibility. “Should my efforts fail, I will remember that from infancy I have scrupulously fulfilled his every wish; I will remember that prejudice, not reason, guides his actions, and for once judge for myself.”

“And will the performance of past duties sanction disobedience to the will of a father?” asked Rosalthe. “Will it silence the reproach of conscience?—Will it calm the horrors of remorse?—Ah, no!—Think of a parent’s malediction; think, tremble, and escape misery!”

“You argue like one uninfluenced by passion,” said Adelbert, reproachfully;

“love never reasons. Tell me, Rosalthe, candidly tell me, was every obstacle removed, would your heart accede to my wishes?”

“I will speak with candour,” faltered Rosalthe; “will acknowledge——”

“Yet stay,” interrupted Adelbert; “reflect ere you reply; remember my life, my peace, my happiness, hangs on the decision; for if you renounce me—if you spurn me from you—I will not answer for the deed of desperation I may commit!”

“I will acknowledge,” again faltered Rosalthe, and her eyes sought the ground, “were the present obstacles removed, it would be the pride, the study of my life, to promote the happiness of your’s.”

Adelbert snatched her to his bosom, and in the ecstasy of the moment proposed an immediate union; but Rosalthe’s firm mind was not to be shaken—she remembered the precepts of the Abbess, and solemnly, irrevocably declared, never to
become

become the bride of Adelbert, unsanctioned by the Baron's approbation. The decree was passed; it was in vain the Count besought her to revoke it; she listened, unconvinced by his arguments; but to soothe his impetuosity, sunk on her knees, and, in the sight of Heaven, vowed to know no other love than the chosen Adelbert.

The night was unusually still; the pale moon illumined the earth, and the bright star of evening twinkled in the horizon: Prudence whispered it was late, and Rosalthe proposed returning to the cottage. Airy as the gossamer, she tripped through the ruins, for her heart was light as it was innocent—doubt and perplexity had vanished, and, as the snow melting beneath the refulgent rays of the sun, left not a vestige behind.

“Where will you reside,” enquired the Count, as they walked from the chapel,

“until the blessed hour I can claim your vows?”

“At the convent of St. Florensia,” replied Rosalthe; “the Lady Abbess has ever been the most kind, the most indulgent of friends, and her affection claims my confidence.”

“You will acquaint her then with our engagement?” resumed the Count.

“Certainly,” said Rosalthe; “my heart has ever been open to her inspection, and its dearest secret must not be concealed.”

“And should she wish to keep thee to herself!” fearfully exclaimed Adelbert; “should she wish to enrich the community with a new, a lovely victim—should she expatiate on the sorrows of the world, and dwell on the glories of religion—should she point out the vows of love as futile and unbinding—should she, in a moment of enthusiasm, bind thy brow with the veil of seclusion—think, Rosalthe, think,

think, what would be my disappointment, my anguish, my despair, when, rich with hope, I approached the grate—when, exultingly, I claimed my bride, to be told her choice was Heaven—her pursuit, the cold, the frigid vocation of a nun ! Death, at that moment, would be mercy ; for madness, and ten-fold horror, would seize my brain !”

“ Alas ! how little do you know the Abbess,” replied Rosalthe ; “ and how little, how very little confidence can you place in my affection. Once I wished to commence my noviciate ; once I ardently petitioned the Abbess to grant my desire ; I thought that serenity and peace would be my portion—that in taking a final leave of the world, every tender sentiment, every incautious wish, would die within me ; I thought that my affection would be alone devoted to one supreme Being, and that the exercise of my duty to Him would drive every earthly wish from my heart ; I thought that the tear of friendship might steal down

my cheek, but that love, the fatal cause of human misery, could never enter my bosom. The Abbess listened to my wishes, and then strove to convince me that they were fallacious ; she told me that the birth of my hopes was enthusiasm—‘and think, my child,’ she continued, ‘what will be your regret, your sorrow, when that enthusiasm shall have expired—when a long, long life, of prayer and confinement, shall alone be spread before you.’ Those were her words—by me will they ever be cherished ; for scarce had I been a week from the convent,” and her voice faltered in the confession, “ when the chimera vanished—the veil which had obscured my reason disappeared—the difference between a negative and an active life was obvious—and my heart acknowledged, feelingly acknowledged, that though content might be found in the gloom of a monastery, happiness resided in an intercourse with society—happiness was alone to be obtained in living for others, as well as for ourselves.”

“ And

“And that lesson my Rosalthe learned at Lunenberg Castle,” said the delighted Adelbert.

Rosalthe smiled upon her lover; her heart whispered—“That lesson was taught by you;” and her ingenuous countenance conveyed the sentiments her lips refused to articulate.

Mutually satisfied with each other's confidence, they parted at the garden-gate; but ere the Count pressed her hand in soft adieu, he entreated her to meet him the two succeeding evenings at the chapel—“and the third,” he continued, in a tone of regret, “will close upon me in my Rosalthe's absence—but my thoughts will return to Lower Saxony, my thoughts will ever hover o'er the convent of St. Florensia.”

Rosalthe sighed, a tear forced its way, and to hide her emotion she rushed into the cottage.

“ Hey-day, child, why all this perturbation ?” said the dame. “ Where have you been, and who brought you to the gate ?”

“ Only to the chapel,” replied Rosalthe.

“ And only the Count de Lunenberg,” interrupted Dusseldorf, laughing. “ I begin to see the result of all these chapel meetings; and query, whether the Lady Abbess will feel satisfied with Rosalthe’s return to the convent without her heart.”

“ Indeed, my dear father, my heart is quite safe,” said the blushing Rosalthe.

“ Who doubts it, child ?” resumed Dusseldorf. “ ’Tis only a little pledge given for another.”

The mingled sensations of pleasure and regret chased repose from the eyelids of Rosalthe, and the cottage had long been wrapt in silence; the clock had long since announced the hour of midnight, ere she sought her pillow. She stood at the casement, her light extinguished, for the chaste moon-beams penetrated into the chamber;
her

her eyes unconscious rested on night's pale orb, and watched in vacancy the clouds as they sailed across it; her mind was filled with the unexpected occurrence of the evening, and Hope's pleasing train of visionary blessings flitted before her.

Happy season of our life, days of youth, hours of enjoyment!—when nature's unsophisticated spirit speaks in every look, is visible in every action, when the heart, panting with new-born ardour, pictures the idol happiness, and springs to enjoy it: 'tis then that the gay scenes of life dance before us—'tis then, by yielding to credulity, we implant thorns, which, springing up, wound our own bosoms—for disappointment, in all its horrors, treads on the heels of Hope, and extinguishes in despair the light which had dazzled in anticipation!

Rosalthe gazed upon the surrounding scenery—in vain she strove to discern the
ivy-

ivy-crowned ruins of the chapel—distance had placed an impenetrable barrier, and she could only behold the revered spot in idea. Again did her heart dwell on the words of Adelbert—again did she revise his every look, his every expression—and, in imagination, saw herself his acknowledged wife—saw herself received as the sister of Angela—as the daughter of the Baron de Lunenberg.

Suddenly a dark form, emerging from a grove of cypress, which flourished near the garden of the cottage, glided swiftly towards the forest; thrice it paused, and thrice it appeared to gaze on the casement. Rosalthe started—awe-struck, she viewed the nocturnal perambulator; a cold and heavy damp hung upon her forehead, and her knees trembled in dire expectancy.

“Prophetic Heaven!” she fearfully ejaculated, closing her eyes in horror, “what strange,

strange, what inexplicable mystery is here?—Why did the form stop, and turn towards the cottage?—Why did it look so stedfastly upon me?”

Again she sought the object of her alarm, but it was fled; the shadow and the figure were alike lost in the intricacies of the forest. Unable to silence her apprehensions, she retired from the window, and, with a mind perplexed and agitated, threw herself on the bed—but even in sleep the mystic figure flitted before her; it stood at the foot of the broken altar, grasping her hand, and forcibly tearing her from Adelbert—when, starting with terror, she awoke. She looked fearfully round the chamber, dreading to see the visionary horror realized; but all was silent, all nature smiled beneath the enlivening dawn of morning: Aurora's bright tinge dispelled night's shadowy vapours; and the sun's glorious rays, darting from behind the

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dark heads of the mountains, reflected with radiant purple the new enlightened clouds.

Rosalthe carefully concealed her late adventure from the knowledge of the superstitious Agatha—well knowing, that was she to hear of a figure gliding at midnight past the cottage, she would believe it a supernatural appearance, which foreboded danger, perhaps death, to some one of its inhabitants ; she therefore decked her features in smiles, and met her at the hour of breakfast with her usual composure,

Anxious for the evening, and eager to fulfil her promised engagement with the Count, Rosalthe watched the hours as they tardily passed ; and when the setting sun, the signal for her departure, arrived, smiling with hope she prepared to quit the cottage.

“ Whither so fast, my dear child ? ” enquired

quired Dusseldorf, seizing her hand. "To the chapel?—Ah, that blush!—Well go; but don't be so long in saying your prayers to-night," he continued archly; "for our good dame, who *can* feel the foggy air, is anxious lest you should take cold."

Rosalthe threw her arms round the neck of the veteran, and kissing his time-beaten cheek, flew lightly down the garden. But destiny marked the fleeting hours with disappointment; for scarce had she entered the plain, when she beheld the Lady Angela, accompanied by a stranger, hastening to her—it was the Prince de Lobenstein. Rosalthe remembered Adelbert, and a sigh swelled her bosom.

"I am come to bid you adieu, my dear friend," said Angela, springing forward to meet her, "for in two short days we leave the castle."

Rosalthe affectionately returned her salute,

lute, and blushing, bowed gracefully to the Prince.

“Is this the inhabitant of a cottage, the daughter of the peasant Dusseldorf?” he mentally enquired, as his eyes rested on her perfect features. “Happy Adelbert!—Well mightest thou steal from the castle—well mightest thou in secret visit the chapel; for if ever an angel’s form enshrined the heart of woman, it is the being I now behold—it is the lovely, the captivating Rosalthe. To possess those charms, to warm that heart,” he continued musing, “it is worth the trial. I will rouse ambition’s lambent spark, man’s precious auxiliary in the female breast—I will teach her to despise the obscurity of poverty—I will teach her to laugh at the rigid principles of the Abbess, and the cold forbidding austerities of Father Anselmo—I will transport her to the region of pleasure, and live the envy of my cotemporaries in the maze of dissipation.”

Such

Such were the ideas of the Prince; as they proceeded to the rock; for Angela wished to visit the hermitage previous to her departure for Dresden. But he knew not the being he would have inveigled—he knew not the heart against which his machinations were formed—he believed her unguarded and unsuspecting—he believed her credulous to the flattering sentiments of designing adulation—he believed her open to those arts of seduction, which he had often studied and practised with success. He remembered the lines of Dryden, and built his strength upon woman's weakness.

“ Unhappy sex!—whose beauty is your snare,
Expos'd to trials, made too frail to bear!
I gave them beauty to subdue the strong,
(A mighty empire, but it lasts not long!)
I gave them pride, to make mankind their slave,
But in exchange, to men I flattery gave.”

On reaching the summit of the rock, Angela requested them to remain on the
bridge

bridge during her visit to the recluse ; and Rosalthe, with spirits but ill calculated to entertain a stranger, leant pensively over the rail, her eyes fixed on the distant cypress, which waved over the ruined chapel.

Often is the mariner, when in sight of port, driven by adverse winds into the open sea !—Often is the cup of joy raised to our lips, and in a moment dashed to the ground ! Rosalthe's heart was full—she remembered the regret, the uneasiness of her lover, and the tears stole in silence down her cheek.

“What a sublime, what an extensive prospect is here !” said the Prince, endeavouring to force her into conversation. “Surely I am transported into the blissful regions of Paradise ; for every object,” gazing stedfastly on Rosalthe, “partakes of Heaven.”

She

She spoke not—she scarce heard his eulogium.

“ And do you sometimes visit this solitude ?” he enquired.

“ I often walk to the hermitage of Father Anselmo,” replied Rosalthe.

“ Happy, envied recluse !” exclaimed the Prince. “ Who would not resign the pleasures of the world—who would not forego the pursuits of ambition, to be visited in their retirement by the goddess of beauty ?—But, perhaps,” he continued, with a sigh, “ the anchorite is insensible to these blessings—perhaps he beholds with indifference the angelic softness of that countenance, the incomparable proportion of that form. Oh that I was Father Anselmo !—Oh that I could convince thee, that the rose, which is lost upon the mountain, when transplanted into the cultivated garden of the botanist, diffuses its sweets around, and flourishes the ornament of the rich parterre !”

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“It is the emblem of modesty I would wish to resemble,” said Rosalthe mildly; “for Father Anselmo says, that the virgin heart should be as the retiring lily, bending beneath the weight of the morning dew.”

“The Father does not do justice to your charms, lovely Rosalthe,” resumed the Prince; “age, and the austerities of the cowl, have frozen the ardour of passion, and the discernment of youth. If you would suffer me to convey you to Dresden ——”

“To Dresden!” repeated Rosalthe, in a voice of astonishment; “why should you wish to convey me to Dresden?”

“To place you in a sphere where your beauty would shine conspicuous,” resumed the Prince; “to take you from the obscurity of a cottage, to make you the envied mistress of a palace.”

“And my parents?” said Rosalthe, reproachfully.

“Would bless the day of your elevation,” rejoined the Prince. “Say, angelic

gelic girl!" and he attempted to seize her hand, "will you fly from this odious retirement?—Will you accept happiness and grandeur?"

Rosalthe shrunk terrified from his touch, and, with a look of horror, was hastening to the hermitage, when Angela met her at the door. The glowing red with which the setting sun had tinged the horizon, had shadowed into grey ere they separated at the garden-gate. The moon had not yet risen, and the dark branches of the forest waved gloomy and forbidding. Rosalthe paused, doubtful whether to enter the cottage, or to hasten to the chapel of St. Florensia; but the probability that Adelbert, fatigued with waiting, had returned to the castle, and the recollection of the figure she had seen the preceding night, induced her to relinquish the design. Her eyes rested on the spot where she had lost sight of it, and shuddering at the remembrance, she

she flew through the garden, and joined Dusseldorf and Agatha in the parlour.

The succeeding evening, anxious to remove the doubts which her absence might have awakened in the mind of Adelbert, she quitted the cottage, and had scarcely passed the borders of the forest, when she beheld the Prince de Lobenstein hurrying towards her; she wished to avoid him, but it was impossible—like an evil genius, he pursued, and overtook her.

“Why would you fly me, lovely Rosalthe?” he enquired, taking her hand—
“How have I incurred your displeasure?—Since the first moment I saw you, no other being has occupied my thoughts—I existed but in the hope of beholding you again—and now that that hope is realized, why will you, by an ill-timed reserve, cloud with discontent the moment of felicity? I come, angelic captivating girl, to renew my last night’s proposal—to offer you a heart,
glowing

glowing with admiration—a heart, panting to promote your happiness—a heart, panting to transplant the beauteous rose from the barren soil of its nativity.”

“If you speak in metaphor,” said Rosalthe, coldly, “know that the stem of the rose would break, the flowers droop, and wither beneath your care. No, my Lord—a mind content with its condition, a mind impressed with the sacred fervour of devotion, is not to be seduced by the gaudy bait of splendour and dissipation; a mind thus educated, a mind thus instigated by virtue, requires no change, but the absence of him who would seduce her.”

Rosalthe was passing on, but the Prince again stopped her. “We part not thus!” he exclaimed; “first tell me why you disdain me, and whither you are going?”

“Any where to avoid this interview,” replied Rosalthe, in a transport of grief; “to my convent, to perpetual solitude. Ah, do not, for Heaven’s sake, longer detain

me!" and she struggled to withdraw her hand.

"If the chosen Adelbert was here, proud beauty," sarcastically enquired the Prince, "would you wish to return to your convent?—Would you wish to avoid him?"

"If the Count de Lunenberg was here," replied Rosalthe, reddening with vexation and anger, "you would not use me thus; for in his honour an insulted woman might seek protection."

"But he is not here," rejoined the Prince, exultingly throwing his arms round her waist, "and the voice of *his* Rosalthe cannot reach him. Why should you be more reserved to me than to him?—I know your nocturnal rambles to the chapel, and I know the roof of Dusseldorf's cottage often shelters him from the cold, comfortless damps of the night."

"Holy Virgin!" ejaculated Rosalthe, raising her streaming eyes to Heaven.

"We will only live more openly," continued

tinued the Prince, regardless of her tears ; “ we will drop at once the mask of hypocrisy, and, without scruple, laugh at the Lady Abbess, and the sage friar of the rock.”

“ Impious, sacrilegious wretch !” murmured Rosalthe.

The passing breeze now wafted the sound of approaching voices, and the next instant Dusseldorf and Agatha appeared in the distance. Never was delight more fully experienced in the breast of Rosalthe ; she would have rushed to the arms of her foster parents, but the Prince rudely snatching her to his bosom, rifled a kiss, and then retreated precipitately into the forest.

Rosalthe endeavoured to recover her agitation ; she wished to conceal from the knowledge of her friends the insult she had received, for she trembled at the idea of Adelbert's impetuosity. She knew that his vengeance would pursue the Prince—

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she dreaded that murder might be the result of the meeting ; she therefore chased away the tears which still started to her eyes, and joined the cottagers with a countenance of unconcern.

“ I thought you had been to the chapel,” enquired the dame ; “ are you not going there ? ”

“ Not to-night,” replied Rosalthe, inwardly shuddering at the possibility of again meeting the Prince.

“ And why not to-night ? ” asked Dusseldorf—“ to-morrow we might have expected that answer.”

“ Because,” faltered Rosalthe, “ it is so late I am afraid to go.”

“ How long have you been such a coward, my dear child ? ” again questioned Dusseldorf. “ Come, Rosalthe, do not blush, but tell us the truth of the story ; for I suspect that the Count de Lunenberg is engaged at the castle, and not able to take his accustomed walk.”

Rosalthe

Rosalthe answered not, and Agatha, fearful of the night air, proposed returning to the cottage. Dispirited and uneasy, our heroine partook of the evening's repast, more in conformity to custom than inclination; she dreaded lest Adelbert, offended at her apparent negligence, should leave Saxony without seeking an explanation; and when she reached the solitude of her chamber, she threw herself on a chair, and wept at the uneasiness of her own reflections. The appearance of the figure, the conduct of the Prince, was no longer thought of—Adelbert filled every idea.

Whilst yet she mused—whilst yet, in sadness, her head reclined upon her hand, she heard the garden-gate carefully opened; the horrors of the preceding night returned to her memory—she listened in breathless expectation.

“Rosalthe!” in a loud whisper, was pronounced from the garden. Every fear

vanished—the voice vibrated to her heart—she threw open the casement, and beheld the Count.

“ Why that agitation ? — Why those tears ? ” he anxiously enquired. “ Say, my Rosalthe, has any affliction occasioned this sorrow ?—Perhaps it is for me that you weep—perhaps it is the idea of our approaching separation.”

“ It is only the dejection of spirits,” returned Rosalthe, “ caused by the fear of your attributing to neglect the non-performance of my engagement ; but, indeed, I was unavoidably detained, by, your sister and the Prince de Lobenstein visiting the cottage ; and when they returned to the castle, it was too late to go the chapel.”

“ Enough—but to night ? ” questioned Adelbert.

“ An unwelcome intruder again prevented me,” answered Rosalthe.

“ You have removed a weight from my heart ! ” exclaimed Adelbert. “ I will acknowledge I knew not what to think ; for
to

to suspect your love, was madness. For two whole hours I paced the ruin, in an agitation not to be described—But no more of this—'tis past, and happiness again smiles upon me, in the assurance of your affection. But to the purport of my visit:—Will you, in the morning, ere the sun shall have exhaled the dew from the flowers, meet me at the chapel of St. Florensia?—Will you, ere we part, once more exchange vows of fidelity and truth? At break of day, the Baron, Angela, and the Prince de Lobenstein, leave Lunenberg Castle; I have confided the secret of our love to the Count de Lindenthal, and he consents to remain some hours after their departure. He knows the delicacy of your scruples, and he sincerely feels for the uneasiness and distress of my mind.”

Rosalthe listened with concern; she disapproved of the confidence imposed on Sigismar; she wished, unless sanctioned by the Baron, no eye to have discovered
D 4 their

their affection, no ear to have heard the tale: but it was too late—the secret was disclosed—reproach was needless, and her heart was not made for it. She, therefore, acceded to his proposal; and, as the night was cold, and a drizzling rain began to fall, entreated him to return to the castle, and hastily closed the casement.

CHAP. III.

WE will now return to the moment when Adelbert, elated with the certainty of Rosalthe's affection, quitted her at the garden gate, after obtaining her promise to meet him the two succeeding evenings at the chapel of St. Florensia. Like an arrow shot from a bow, he bounded across the plain, nor dreamed of the possibility of a disappointment. But, alas!—how deceitful is hope!—how transient sublunary felicity!—how short the interim between the exultation of joy, and the depression of sorrow! He thought that peace and tranquillity, like a calm unruffled sea, was

spread before him; he forgot that shoals and quicksands, concealed beneath the smiling surface, often engulphed the heedless mariner in the moment of fancied security; he forgot that the Baron, uninfluenced by love, saw through a different medium, and judged with different ideas from his own; he forgot that the German pride of birth, the dignity of family, could never stoop to a connexion with the daughter of a dependant, whose virtue and beauty were her only recommendations; he forgot every thing but the certainty of Rosalthe's love, and that certainty placed him beyond the reach of misfortune.

The amazing contrast between the late gloomy depression of his spirits, and the cheerfulness of his manner during supper, was a subject of wonder to the whole party. The Baron, with pleasure, gazed upon his son; the anxious surmises which affection had created were vanished, and he now attributed his past dejection to indisposition.

Angela

Angela good humouredly rallied her brother on the mystery of his late melancholy, and with an arch smile enquired, whether Rosalthe had returned to the convent?

“I believe, Adelbert,” she continued, “there is no fear of her taking the veil *now*?”

“I hope not,” answered the Count; “but why such marked emphasis upon the word *now*, my sister?”

“Because—because——” hesitated Angela.

“Because why?” questioned the Baron—“Explain your hint;” and for the first time the possibility of Dusseldorf’s daughter being the author of his son’s uneasiness darted across his brain.

“Because she has seen the castle,” resumed Angela, “and——”

“Who?” eagerly interrupted her father.

“The Baron de Lunenberg.”

“Pshaw, this trifling is ridiculous, Angela; speak rationally, or be silent.”

“Now you are angry, my dear father,” and she threw her arms round his neck, and looked tenderly in his face.

The Baron struggled to retain his gravity, but the blandishments of his child chased displeasure from his countenance, and his native smile returned. Angela saw it, and resumed—“Is it not more natural for girls, like Rosalthe and myself, to prefer Lunenberg Castle, and the society it contains,” bowing gracefully round the table, “to the austerities of a convent, and the phlegmatic conversation of devotees?”

“You are an insinuating gipsey,” said the Baron, tenderly patting her cheek, “and can do what you please with your father.”

In the morning, Adelbert, relying on the indulgence of the Baron, followed him into the library.

“I am come, my revered father,” he said, addressing him, “to claim your serious

rious attention—to supplicate your concurrence—to speak on the subject nearest my heart—to tell you, that on your lips hangs the decision of my happiness or misery.”

“Explain yourself, my son,” said the Baron; “and know that the study of my life shall be to promote the welfare of my children.”

“You have ever been the most affectionate of parents,” resumed Adelbert, “and affection merits confidence. I am come to throw aside disguise—to tell you that my heart has long and painfully struggled beneath concealment—to tell you that I love, I adore Rosalthe, and with the purest, chastest vows would wed her.”

“Rosalthe!” repeated the Baron, in a voice of surprise and sorrow—“Rosalthe, the daughter of the peasant Dusseldorf?”

“Rosalthe, the child of innocence and virtue,” rejoined Adelbert; “Rosalthe, the ornament of her sex—the unconscious possessor of perfection.”

“Alas!

“Alas! Adelbert,” said the Baron after a pause, “how little was I prepared for such a discovery!—How little reason had I to suspect the inheritor of my honours—the heir to one of the most antient, most noble families in Germany, degenerating from the spirit of his ancestors, and meanly sacrificing dignity, pride, family, at the shrine of passion!—Rouse yourself ere too late—shake off the infatuation—paint not the cheek of your father with the blush of shame—teach not your sister the crime of disobedience, through your example.”

“Pardon me, my Lord,” said Adelbert; “I once thought your soul superior to prejudice.”

“I hope you will continue to think so,” replied the Baron; “it has ever been my wish through life to steer void of prejudice; I have ever considered it as a veil which obscures the light of reason—which affects the head, as well as the heart; for while it darkens our understandings, while it counteracts the energies of the mind, it deafens our
our

our ear to the complaints of sorrow, and renders us inattentive to the calls of humanity. But divest yourself of passion, my dear boy, and tell me, whether prejudice influences the father of Adelbert, Count de Lunenberg, in declining a union with the daughter of Dusseldorf, the son of a gardener, and the vassal to his estate?"

"Rosalthe would lose the name of Dusseldorf in the title of Countess de Lunenberg," replied Adelbert, "and her manners would add dignity to any station."

"True, Adelbert; but will not the offspring of this marriage be as nearly allied to the peasant Dusseldorf, as to the Baron de Lunenberg?"

"Nobility need never blush at a connexion with honest poverty," replied Adelbert, proudly; "and the children who would feel degradation in acknowledging an aged and respected veteran for their grandsire, must be a dishonour to his virtue, and a disgrace to their name."

"Come, for Heaven's sake, descend from
the

the high flights of romance," said the Baron, "and speak in the language of common sense!—Tell me one plea to be held forth for this marriage?"

"My happiness, and the happiness of a lovely, interesting, unoffending girl."

"Have you then made Rosalthe acquainted with your passion?" fearfully interrogated the Baron.

"I have, my Lord."

"And she has graciously *condescended* to accept you?"

"No," said Adelbert, warmly; "Rosalthe possesses a pride superior to that of birth—the pride of innate merit, of spotless virtue, of conscious rectitude—a pride which exalts the humble with the great—a pride which whispers, 'my conduct will bear the investigating eye of scrutiny, why then should I stoop to man?'"

"Proceed," said the Baron, with a smile of irony.

"She rejected me," resumed the Count, in mournful accents.

"Rejected

“Rejected you!” repeated the Baron, starting. “Rejected you!” he continued, in a voice of mortification and surprise. “Father of Heaven!—may I believe what I hear?—But ’tis well *your* disgrace preceded *your* rejection.”

“She rejected me,” rejoined Adelbert, in a voice of softened tenderness, “until sanctioned by parental authority; she rejected me, because she would not clandestinely become my bride.”

“And her refusal occasions this appeal?” said the Baron, haughtily. “Had Rosalthe been the soft, the complying girl you wished, she would ere now have been the wife of my son, and my blessing or malediction would alike have been disregarded!”

“Hold, my father!—you are mistaken,” said Adelbert, grasping his arm. “Your malediction would have embittered my joy—your sanction would have raised me to happiness; yet, whilst I implore the boon—whilst kneeling, I solicit your approbation, I acknowledge that Rosalthe recalled

recalled me to duty—that Rosalthe pointed out the misery attending disobedience, and taught me the submission due to parental affection.”

“ I thank her,” said the Baron ; “ my heart feels the debt upon my gratitude, and sighs to repay her disinterestedness. I admire her perfections—I think her form faultless—her countenance captivating—her manners enchanting ; I think her superior to most women—I would be her friend, but I cannot be her father !”

“ Recal that sentence !—in pity to my distracted feelings, recal it !” entreated Adelbert. “ Oh ! remember the moment, when with the faltering tongue of modesty—when with glowing cheeks, and averted eyes, my angel-mother listened to your vows, and affirmed her love ; think when with exultation you gazed upon her beauty—when you felt secure of bliss—when you believed her all your own—think what would have been the despair, the anguish of your mind, had the stern
mandate

mandate of power interposed, and severed you for ever ! Ah !—does it reach your heart ?—You weep, my father—Think—think of past hours—think of my departed mother, and pity me.”

“ I do—I do, my son,” said the Baron, with a sigh of anguish ; “ for you I would sacrifice my life—but honour,” raising his eyes with enthusiastic warmth to Heaven, “ is dearer than life : our ancestors have preserved it for ages inviolate, and will you, Adelbert, by yielding to the influence of passion, renounce it ? The mother upon whom you call—the mother, whose blessed memory you revere, would sanction my refusal—would bid her son remember the duty he owes himself, the duty he owes his family—would bid him give up Rosalthe.”

“ Then despair must be my portion,” groaned Adelbert, with a start of frenzy. “ My father decrees it—despair—madness—death !” and thrice he struck his clenched hand against his forehead.

“ Adelbert !”

“Adelbert!” said the Baron, in a voice of anxious fondness, “be composed—your expressions terrify me.”

“It shall be done!” exclaimed the Count, starting.

“What shall be done?” questioned the alarmed father, forcibly grasping his arm. “Tell me what you mean?—Tell me why all this wildness?”

“By all the saints in Heaven,” vociferated the impetuous Adelbert, struggling for freedom—“I will not bear it!”

“Calm your spirits, my son, my beloved Adelbert,” faltered the Baron, as tottering he sunk on a chair. “All-gracious Power!” he continued, as the pallid hue of death overspread his features, “rigorous, but righteous Judge!—what may this insanity portend?”

“’Tis all that’s left me!” ejaculated the Count. “This instant, this very instant, I will seek relief!” He was rushing to the door.

“Who would be a father!” groaned the Baron,

Baron, in a voice of agony, and with a start of desperation sprung forward to detain him: the effort was momentary, for ere he reached the door, overcome by horror and exertion, he fell powerless on the floor. The situation of the Baron recalled the recollection of Adelbert.

“ My father !” he exclaimed, sinking on his knees, and endeavouring to raise him. “ Heavenly Powers!—Have I become a parricide?—Have I murdered my father?—Have I rived the heart of the best, the most affectionate, the most indulgent of parents?—Have I plunged a dagger——”

“ A dagger!” repeated the Baron, looking wildly around, “ who talks of daggers?—Take me to my son, and if you have mercy, sheath it in my bosom; for my mind is tortured, and the wound by him inflicted can never be healed.”

“ Oh, say not so, my father !”

“ Are you here, my son?” exclaimed the Baron, recognizing the voice of Adelbert, and throwing his arms affectionately round him

him—"are you safe?—then I am happy."

"Eternal Providence, I thank thee!" whispered the Count. "Yes, my father, I am here—I am safe—I am returned to my duty—I am returned to cheer and comfort you."

"Adelbert!" said the Baron, in a voice of incredulous joy.

"My friend!—my parent!" returned the Count,

"Adelbert, my son!—my beloved son!—Ah, Heaven!" and he raised his tearful eyes—"who would not be a father!"

The Count's enthusiasm vanished with the moment; for scarce had he quitted the library, scarce had he reached his own apartment, when love regained his empire—when Rosalthe, in all the charms of innocence, in unadorned and genuine nature, appeared before him.

"Never, never will I forget thee!" he exclaimed, as his head rested on his arm.

‘ Never will I deceive thy fascinating purity ; never will I betray thy unsuspecting affection. No, Rosalthe, if I cannot call thee mine—if all my past dreams of happiness must vanish into air, sacred and inviolate will I cherish thy faith, and the vows to thee poured out shall never be transferred to another. Yet if thou wouldst secretly become my bride—if thou wouldst embrace the lot of thy Adelbert—if with him thou wouldst fly from Saxony, and retire to some deep, some hidden solitude, what days of bliss would be ours ! the enlivening sun would never behold us discontented—the shades of night would never find us melancholy : free from jealousy, from care, from every turbulent passion, time, which changes all things, would have no other effect upon us than strengthening our affection—the flame would burn through life pure as it is at this moment. But my father !—Ah, Heaven ! would not my desertion destroy his peace—and dare I sigh for happiness at his expence ? The
banditti

banditti of the mountains, whose minds are callous and implacable—whose pursuits are bloodshed, rapine, and plunder—who show their hatred of the world by violating its laws, and murdering its inhabitants, would be more merciful; with the sword they would quickly terminate the misery of their victim—while I, with impious and unheard-of cruelty, would deliberately prepare a grave for my parent, through the suffering medium of a broken heart.”

Such were the ideas of Adelbert; and when day gave place to the pale twilight of evening, he hastened to the chapel of St. Florensia, to pour out his griefs at the feet of Rosalthe—to receive advice and consolation from her affection.

“Heaven knows,” he exclaimed, as he looked distractedly round the ruin, “no dawn of hope, no ray of peace is left me; in two days I must quit the blest scene of past felicity, and mingle in a world I despise.”

despise. Oh, Rosalthe!" and he threw himself with violence on the steps of the broken altar, "why were not thy charms eternally hid from my eyes?—Why was I permitted to love, to idolize, to adore, and not possess thee?"

Every passing breeze that whistled among the ivy, every distant sound, every indistinct murmur, reached his heart; oft, in fancy, did he hear the light footsteps of the maid—oft did he rush to the entrance of the chapel, and return disappointed. Thus past the lingering hours, but Rosalthe came not; the deep shade of night enveloped every object, and when Adelbert recrossed the plain, a few twinkling stars enlightened his dreary path.

He paused at the front of Dusseldorf's cottage, he looked wistfully at the casement in Rosalthe's chamber, but no cheerful ray darted from the interior; all was

wrapped in darkness—all was wrapped in impenetrable silence.

“Peaceful be thy slumbers!” he exclaimed, as he pursued his road; “peaceful, Rosalthe, as thy mind is innocent!”

On reaching the castle, his spirits felt unequal to support the uninteresting conversation of the party assembled at supper; he was therefore hastily retreating to his apartment, when, as he crossed the hall, the loud laugh of the Prince de Lobenstein seemed to mock his feelings: passing swiftly on, he rushed up the staircase, and retired disgusted and dispirited. A thousand gloomy ideas filled his imagination—ideas which are more easily felt than expressed: by turns reason and passion possessed his soul, and both alike commanded.

In the morning the Count de Lindenthal joined him in the shrubbery. “Your dejection,” he said, taking his arm, “is too obvious

obvious to escape the eye of friendship ; yet think not I wish to dive into your secrets, but tell me candidly, can sympathy or active service remove the cause?"

Adelbert pressed his hand, and sighed.

"I fear it is as I suspected," resumed Sigismar; "I fear the healing balm can be administered but by one—the lovely daughter of Dusseldorf—the beauteous Rosalthe."

"Oh, spare me!" interrupted Adelbert, whilst a conscious glow overspread his countenance.

"Have I touched the string?—Have I solved the mystery?" enquired the Count.

"You have," mournfully replied Adelbert; "long in secret did I sigh for Rosalthe—long did pride struggle with love—long did I smother the flame, but virtue completed what beauty began—I acknowledged my passion—Rosalthe smiled upon my love, but my father forbade the union.

Such then is the cause of my sorrow—now assist me with your friendship, aid me with your counsel.”

“Alas! my friend,” said Sigismar, “you impose on me a task I am incapable of fulfilling; the same obstacles must ever remain—duty forbids a clandestine union, and the Baron, I fear, will continue inflexible.”

“Necessity, not duty!” replied Adelbert; “I have urged Rosalthe on my knees—I have besought her to accept my hand, but she has solemnly vowed, even at the foot of the altar, never to be mine in opposition to a father’s consent; and though soft as the morning dew—mild and tender as the dove—still does she baffle all my arguments, still does she persist in her resolution.”

“Rosalthe is a wonderful, an inexplicable being!” exclaimed De Lindenthal: “there must be some concealment, some mystery—her agitation at the mention of my name—her surprising resemblance to
the

the portrait at Lindenthal Castle, first awakened the suggestion, whilst her sentiments, her manners confirm it: surely such honour, such dignity, such greatness of mind, cannot belong to the daughter of the peasant Dusseldorf."

"Education is second nature," remarked Adelbert, "and Rosalthe is indebted to the Abbess of St. Florensia for her correct sentiments."

They were now joined by Angela and the Prince de Lobenstein, and the evening closed with Adelbert's expedition to the chapel, and, as the reader has already been made acquainted with, his disappointment; but he returned not until the apparent negligence was removed—until Rosalthe had explained every doubt, and engaged to meet him early the ensuing morning.

All was confusion at the castle preparatory to the departure of the family; Angela still, in fancy, pictured Dresden in the

same high colours—still did she pant to partake of its amusements—and yet a sigh would now and then force its way, at the approaching separation from her brother, the Count de Lindenthal, and Rosalthe.

“ I fear, my dear child,” said the Baron, having attentively listened to the expectations of happiness she had expressed—“ I fear, the reality will fall short of the anticipation.”

Angela looked towards him with a smile of incredulity.

“ Youth is sanguine and inexperienced,” resumed the Baron, tenderly taking her hand ; “ it spreads over every scene the magic of delight, and, like the deceitful property of the microscope, magnifies amusement into happiness—pleasure into rapture. You, Angela, are entering on a path I am quitting—nay, do not look grave ; conviction I know must be purchased
by

by experience; but yet I could wish to see the fruit which the blossoms of infancy promised—I could wish to see my declining age, like a setting sun, gilded by the glorious beams of my childrens' prosperity and virtue."

Adelbert, in a posture of meditation, rested his head on his hand, whilst Angela continued gazing attentively on her father.

"In the scenes in which you are about to mix, my daughter, you will see characters, new, numerous, perhaps interesting; I know the softness of your nature—I could wish to guard your unadulterated innocence, your unsophisticated simplicity—I could wish to shield your heart against yielding too easily to the dangerous tenderness of a new-born passion."

Adelbert started, whilst the Baron, unmindful of his emotion, proceeded—

“ Yet do not mistake my affection for a rigid and unfeeling system ; I have bowed beneath the power of love—I have acknowledged its influence: when properly directed, it is the source of every generous, every elevated sentiment—but when, like a vessel sailing before the wind, the rudder of reason is broken, it becomes a prey to each passing breeze. I could wish to see my children mark well the spot, ere they erect the foundation of their happiness or misery ; I could wish to see them rich in those principles which habituate the soul to uniform honour—which gives real and lasting transport to the connubial state, in peace, esteem, confidence ; I could wish to see them glide smoothly down the stream of life, virtuous, obedient, happy, and their age, like their father’s——”

“ Cheered by the blessings of their dependants,” interrupted Adelbert, gazing tenderly on the Baron, “ the affection of their friends, and the regard of all who know them.”

“ I wish,

“ I wish, Adelbert, we could always remain young though,” said Angela, smiling at her brother’s enthusiasm.

“ The time will come, my child,” answered the Baron, wiping a tear from his eye, “ when, like myself, were it possible, you would feel unwilling to retrace the path of life ; it is at best but a painful pilgrimage, for few, indeed, are the years of unclouded felicity—the sting of care becomes implanted in the breast, and imperceptibly are we launched into scenes, which, with the bitter draught of misery, dashes the cup of life. As the toy is discarded when we rise above childhood, so do the pursuits of youth cease to captivate in riper years. When I was at your age, the happy hours passed swiftly along—the tear which fell was soon forgotten—the joys of the heart were pure and unalloyed ; I laughed at misfortune—I thought destiny had placed me beyond the pressure of calamity, but woefully was I deceived ; death awakened

me from the dream—death snatched your angel mother from my arms, and whispered, ‘man is born to suffer.’ If such are the reflections of one who may be termed fortunate—of one who never felt the horrors of adversity, or the pain of worldly difficulties—think of those whose journey has been uniformly dreary—whose path has never been lightened by intervening rays of bliss—who scarcely ever felt more peace than what the mendicant has been permitted to partake. My Angela I know is happy, and though for many years I have remained the ceaseless prey of consuming grief, yet shall not a murmur pass my lips; with pious resignation I wait the fated hour, in the assurance of meeting, never to be disunited—of meeting, where cheerfully we may adore the Power who inflicted the severest stroke my heart could have sustained.”

As the Baron ceased speaking, an unre-
sisting

sisting tear stole down his cheek, and he gazed proudly, affectionately, on his children: at length rising, and extending a hand to each—"Come, let us seek our guests," he continued; "the Prince and the Count de Lindenthal will wonder at our absence."

The dappled east began to emit some rays of light, when Angela arose, impatient to commence her journey; and the sun had not yet gilded the tops of the hills, or dispersed the hovering fogs of morning, when, with the Baron, and the Prince de Lobenstein, she quitted the hospitable walls of Lunenberg Castle. Adelbert gazed on the carriage till distance lessened it to his view, and then, with an aching heart, hastened to the chapel, to bid adieu to Rosalthe.

"Painful, agonizing necessity!" he exclaimed, as he impatiently watched the path
E 6 which

which led to the cottage. "Sleep, inauspicious to my wishes, hangs on the eye lids of my Rosalthe, and retards her appointed visit. Soft, balmy god, fly from her pillow—shorten not the painful bliss of our last meeting!"

Blushing, she now entered the ruin, and extending her hand to Adelbert—"I am come," she faltered, "to wish you happy—to bid you adieu—to tell you—" and tears stole from her azure eyes, "that my prayers shall follow your path—shall be offered up to shield you from danger and sorrow!"

"And I am come," replied Adelbert, in the impetuosity of his soul, "to implore you, by love—by truth—by mercy—by all you cherish on earth, or value in Heaven, to avert the vow so rashly made! to——" and he looked fearfully at her, "give me your hand—to enable me to leave Saxony with security—to enable me to leave my
bride

bride at the Convent of St. Florensia, assured that power can never wrest her from me !”

“ Alas ! what is it you ask ? ” faintly articulated Rosalthe. “ Will not the assurance of an undivided heart, of eternal affection, silence every doubt ? ”

“ On your side it may,” replied the Count ; “ but I am going where——”

“ Beauty may captivate,” interrupted Rosalthe, “ and the remembrance of former attachments be forgotten ; but know, my Lord,” and her faultless features glowed with dignified pride, “ Rosalthe scorns a heart that is retained by the cold principles of honour : from this moment she frees you from those engagements which a further intercourse with the world may render burdensome.”

She paused, astonished at the confidence which had supported her ; whilst Adelbert, scarce believing what he heard, viewed her with sorrow and amazement.

“What do I hear?” he exclaimed—“Can I believe my senses?—Is it Rosalthe who perverts my meaning?—who, without a pang, proposes a separation?—How have I merited these unkind, these cruel reproaches?—Have I ever trifled with your peace?—Have I ever acted unworthy your affection?”

“Never, never!” sobbed Rosalthe, softened into tenderness; the colour retreated from her cheek, and her whole frame trembled with agitation. “Pardon me,” she at length articulated, “I have been unjust, but my warmth has betrayed the affection of a heart which can never waver.”

“Pardon you, Rosalthe!” repeated the delighted witness of her confusion—“Pardon you!—Ah, Heaven! not for the brightest gems of the east—not for whole years of negative content, would I exchange the rapture of this moment.”

Time, envious of their felicity, stole swiftly away, and Rosalthe, with reluctant sadness,

sadness, quitted the chapel; Adelbert walked pensively at her side, one moment murmuring at the inflexibility of the Baron, the next calling on Heaven to witness his vows of fidelity and truth.

“Sacred and revered edifice!” he exclaimed, directing her attention to the grey turrets of the convent, “how often, in memory, shall I visit thy distant gloom!—How often retrace the spot which will inclose the dearest blessing this world can ever give me!”

“And how often will my thoughts wander beyond its walls!” sighed Rosalthe, as she opened the garden-gate—“How often will they rest on the only being, who, in my eyes, could render St. Florensia solitary!”

Adelbert grasped her hand—he pressed it to his heart—to his lips; and when Rosalthe, unable longer to restrain her tears, rushed into the cottage, he hid his face in
his

his handkerchief, and proceeded hastily to the castle. The Count de Lindenthal impatiently waited his return, and in another hour, his betrothed bride, his Rosalthe, the happy retreat of his infancy, and the cherished scenes of his youth, were left far behind.

CHAP. IV.

ROSALTHE hastened to her chamber, and in its retirement indulged the luxury of tears. Long was it ere she could sufficiently compose herself to join her foster parents in the parlour, and even then her countenance resembled an April sky—one moment cheered by an enlivening sunbeam, the next obscured by a passing cloud. Dusseldorf in vain exerted his spirits—in vain he spoke on a thousand different subjects—in vain he rallied the good dame on her known peculiarities; not all his attempts could extort a smile from the pensive Rosalthe: she sat silent and dejected—
her

her head rested on her hand, and her eyes fixed on the garden-gate, where she had last parted from Adelbert.

“ Pray, child, don't you purpose visiting the hermitage to-night ?” enquired Dusseldorf.

“ For why, father ?” asked Rosalthe.

“ To confess your sins to the holy Anselmo, to be sure,” replied Dusseldorf.

“ Sins !” repeated Rosalthe, in a voice of astonishment, “ of what sins do you accuse me ?”

“ Witchcraft and ingratitude,” gravely rejoined Dusseldorf, “ and I can fully substantiate the charge. In the first place, have you not, by the most ingenious and well-contrived spells, bound the heart of the Count de Lunenberg, and now that destiny has in pity placed him beyond the reach of your *charms*, do not your thoughts wander from the dwelling of your infancy, and rest unceasingly on the rover ?”

“ Mercy save us !” cried Agatha, “ if it
is

is a sin to think of a young man, I fear we none shall escape Purgatory."

"Yes, *you* will," said Dusseldorf.

"Not if we are to answer for the errors of our youth," replied the dame: "but come, Rosalthe, look up, look cheerful, and I prophecy all ends in a wedding: it was but last night, in my dream, I saw you going to be buried, and the Count followed as chief mourner."

"And you know things are always to be reversed," observed Dusseldorf, smiling significantly on Rosalthe; "for scarce had I closed my eyes, when I found myself transported by Peace into the land of Silence, and when our good dame awakened me this morning, sure enough I found the contrast."

"Come, now you are witty," said Agatha; "but Heaven knows, if it makes our dear child cheerful, I care not, though it be at my expence."

"We have lived too long together, my
dear

dear Agatha," exclaimed the veteran, "to be offended at each other's sallies."

"Say not too long," interrupted the dame, looking affectionately at her good man; "it is five-and-forty years next month since the blessed hour that made me a wife, and if the next forty-five years could pass as happily, I should even then think my life too short."

"Well do I remember the day!" exclaimed the good old soldier, as a flood of tenderness filled his eyes. "You looked as blooming and as pretty as Rosalthe does at this moment; and when I took the ring from the priest——"

"I, like a silly, trembling fool, gave you the wrong hand," interrupted Agatha.

"Aye, so you did," said Dusseldorf; "but it was all right at last, and never prince had a happier wedding."

"If we have experienced joy," said Agatha, mournfully, "we have also felt sorrow, in the bitterest extreme: it is six-
and-

and-twenty years since happiness, unalloyed by the pang of reflection, has been ours."

"True," replied Dusseldorf; "but the Power who inflicted the wound gave us strength to support it, and kindly sent a cherub," pointing to Rosalthe, "to cheer our declining age—an anchor for our drooping hearts to rest on."

"If I could see the grave of Jacquilina," said Agatha, and the tears of maternal tenderness glistened in her eyes, "my future life would be marked with content; I would—I do look upon Rosalthe as a gift from Heaven!—Hope would once more spring in my bosom—I would fondly cherish the pleasing guest—and futurity alone could show whether I had reason to rejoice! But perhaps at this moment my child is exposed to the horrors of infamy, reproach, and scorn; perhaps in this wide world she cannot find a shelter to screen her wretched head; perhaps she repents the fatal hour
that

that snatched her from innocence; perhaps she lingers, without one bosom in which she can repose her sorrows—without one heart to participate in her afflictions; and though she has forgotten the duty of a daughter, we cannot but remember we are parents.”

Dusseldorf, rising from his chair, walked hastily to the window, whilst the dame, in the fullness of her heart, covered her face with her handkerchief, and wept aloud.

“Agatha,” said Dusseldorf, struggling to command his feelings, “I thought we were to have been cheerful—I thought, by example, we were to have enlivened the spirits of our dear child—and at the very moment I had called forth a smile, you have o’erclouded us all with sadness: come, cheer up, to-morrow she returns to the convent, and to-day we will—we must be happy.—I wish,” turning to Rosalthe, “we
could

could peep into the next year—who knows but then we might see you the Countess de Lunenberg.”

“Recal that wish, my dearest father,” said Rosalthe: “Hope is a blessing, which in this world of misery, where joy is so often succeeded by woe, should ever be encouraged; but the gift of prescience would embitter the present hour—would be the heaviest curse Heaven, in its wrath, could inflict on offending mortals.”

“You are right, child—you are right—I stand corrected,” said Dusseldorf.

“We should never seek to dive into the mysteries of fate,” observed Agatha, “lest we should read our own condemnation: who knows but another year may see you or I peaceably laid beneath the green-sward?”

“Well, should it be so,” rejoined Dusseldorf, “may Heaven rest us at the end of our labours!—but what more do you expect from a man than an acknowledgment of his being in the wrong?”

“Never

“Never in future to repeat the error,” replied Agatha.

“So far so good,” rejoined Dusseldorf; “but now, in pity to my patience, let us have no more moralizing.—I wish the Lady Abbess would spare us Rosalthe another week,” he continued; “I do not like the idea of separating.”

“Neither do I,” said Agatha; “the cottage will be very dull, but it would not be right to encroach upon the superior’s indulgence; besides, it would be only deferring the evil day.”

Rosalthe smiled on the cottagers, and pressing a hand of each to her lips—“Your affection, my beloved friends,” she exclaimed, “is gratifying to my heart; but we must not forget the length of time I have been absent from St. Florensia, and the duty I owe its respected superior.”

“Consequently to-morrow we must part with you,” said Dusseldorf, “and the wood-pigeon too,” looking significantly at Rosalthe.

She

She blushed, her eyes were turned on her little favourite, and as memory retraced the moment, when glowing with ardour and animation, Adelbert had presented it to her care, a faint smile passed over her features, and a half-suppressed sigh stole from her bosom.

Dusseldorf with pain beheld her emotion—he had traced the infant passion from its birth, and now trembled for her peace—he saw his heart's treasure, his darling Rosalthe, exposed to all the horrors of hopeless love, and in the solitude of a cloister, sinking beneath the weight of irremediable woe. He felt the improbability of the Baron's ever receiving her as his daughter, and, from her known sentiments, he knew she would never clandestinely become the bride of the Count; what then remained for her, but a long life of sorrow and regret?

“Heaven avert the evil!” he fervently
VOL. II. F ejaculated,

ejaculated, raising his clasped hands—
“Heaven, in its mercy, avert the evil!”

Rosalthe looked wistfully towards him, whilst Agatha, in a tone of surprise, enquired what evil he so particularly dreaded?

“Sin and sorrow,” replied Dusseldorf, recollecting himself; “what greater evils have we in this world to dread?”

“Those are reasons,” observed Agatha, “which have existed ever since we have known right from wrong; the present evil I should suspect to be of a later date.”

“Curiosity, then,” rejoined Dusseldorf; “will that satisfy you?” at the same time directing to her a look, which seemed to say, “another time I will inform you.”

Agatha understanding the sign, nodded assent, while Rosalthe, unwilling to dive into withheld confidence, and conscious that some depression hung upon the spirits

rits of Dusseldorf, rose to take her accustomed ramble. Imperceptibly was she drawn to the chapel, and as she passed beneath the shadow of the forest, the surrounding scene appeared in unison with her feelings; the trees half-stript of their foliage—the yellow leaves rustling under foot—and the brown and parched surface of the rock, save here and there, where the evergreen arbutus, the prickly holly, and wild laurel, seemed to mock the varying season, and, like her, to mourn the approach of winter: but a summer's sun would renovate their verdure, whilst, with Rosalthe, she knew not but the returning season might, as it had left, find her comfortless and dejected.

There is to a contemplative mind something uncommonly soothing in the autumn of the year—a gloomy stillness, which steals upon the senses, and carries our thoughts beyond the perishable possessions of this world. In the discoloured and falling leaves

of the loftiest trees of the forest, we may trace the decay of power, of honours, and boasted triumphs. The fading blossoms of the flowers of the field, whisper to the ear of beauty—"How transient and short-lived is thy pride!" Nay, every individual blade of grass, every iota of vegetation, proclaims the insignificance of man, and the goodness of his Creator.

Rosalthe felt the ideas I would convey, and as she gazed upon the mouldering arches of the chapel, and listened to the plaintive murmur of the ocean, her mind, forgetful of its own sorrows, wandered back to those dark ages, when the defaced and deserted building before her flourished in all its pristine grandeur—when the sacred choir resounded with divine harmony—when the altar, enriched with splendor, glittered at the rites of midnight vigils. She remembered the tradition, and sighed at the sufferings of the now-sainted Florensia; her misfortunes impressed more
strongly

strongly on the mind of Rosalthe the lessons of her revered Abbess. She knew that lasting happiness was not to be expected on this side the grave; she knew men were not born to dwell for ever on earth, and that Providence wisely ordains human bliss to be imperfect, lest our hearts should too firmly cling to the pursuits of life.

“If it be thy will that I should suffer, Almighty Power!” she exclaimed, in the enthusiasm of the moment, “give me patience to endure, and I bow with resignation!”

The wind mournfully whistled through the clustering ivy, and the spiry heads of the lofty cypress waved in sad concordance with the breeze; no flowers perfumed the air—no feathered warblers strained their little throats; the owl dismally hooted from the branches, and every surrounding object was stamped with desolation and neglect. Rosalthe, wrapped in meditation, conti-

nued kneeling at the foot of the broken altar, till the increasing gloom warned her to depart. As she arose, she thought she distinguished approaching footsteps ; she remembered that Adelbert was far distant, and sighing at the conviction, looked fearfully around ; but though her eyes penetrated the darkened corners of the chapel, she beheld only the loose fragments of monuments, long since mouldered into dust. A heavy sigh sounded from the sacristy ; the figure she had seen at midnight cross the plain—her own mysterious birth—the murder of her father—the death of her persecuted mother—the interest which the Lady Abbess had ever expressed in her fate—the violent emotion she had betrayed, when at the convent she had disclosed the tale of her introduction to the cottage—and her meeting the Count de Lindenthal at Lunenberg Castle, all recurred to her imagination. There seemed a strange concatenation of events, working for some hidden purpose.

“ Perhaps,”

"Perhaps," she mentally ejaculated, "the appearance warns me of threatened danger!" for even the strong mind of Rosalthe sunk for the moment beneath the power of superstition.

Terrified, and scarce daring to breathe, she rested against the shrine of St. Florensia, her hand pressed upon her beating heart; but reason no sooner gained her seat than the mist vanished, and with the supporting courage of conscious innocence, she bent her steps towards the entrance. As she passed the sacristy, "Rosalthe!" was pronounced in tender accents; uttering a half shriek, she raised her eyes to Heaven, and springing forward with precipitation, rushed from the ruin. She rested not, till fatigued and breathless she had quitted the gloom of the forest, and then, in an effusion of tears, her overcharged heart found relief. Again she proceeded, and when she joined her friends at the cottage, no traces of terror remained.

mained. She carefully concealed the adventure from the dame, lest her anxious affection should alarm her with unnecessary fears.

"How soon night closes upon us," said Agatha, looking from the window; "I declare it is almost dark—are you only just come from the chapel?"

"Yes, mother, this moment returned."

"Methinks you stay too late, child," resumed the dame. "I should be afraid—"

Rosalthe started—"Of what would you be afraid?" she eagerly enquired.

"Of her own shadow, to be sure," said Dusseldorf, laughing; "of what else should she be afraid?"

"Ah! you was always incredulous," said Agatha, gravely; "take care conviction does not flash upon your mind yet."

"Husband and wife they say are one flesh," retorted Dusseldorf, "consequently I shall be pardoned, because you have faith enough for both."

"The

“The Virgin shield us !” rejoined Agatha — “I have heard strange stories of that chapel.”

“Of ghosts flying away in flames of fire?” questioned Dusseldorf.

“No, not of ghosts flying away in flames of fire,” repeated the half-angry dame, “but of voices and groans, that have been heard among the ruins. There is Ernolph, the old gardener at Lunenberg Castle, who till then was just like yourself, neither afraid of man or devil.”

“No, no, my old dame, I am not like him neither,” interrupted Dusseldorf.

“And why not?” enquired Agatha.

“Because,” said Dusseldorf, “he is afraid of his wife.”

“Pshaw!—nonsense!—how you interrupt one.—Well, as I was saying,” continued Agatha, addressing Rosalthe, “Ernolph, coming one night later than usual from the hamlet, passed the chapel, and hearing a strange noise from within, he entered, and saw a tall, thin, dark figure

kneeling, where you and I have often knelt in broad day-light, at the foot of the broken altar. He would not own that he was frightened, though I dare say, if the truth was known, he could hardly stand for trembling: well, presently it rose, and whither it walked or flew, or how it went, I can't say, but it vanished in the sacristy."

"In the sacristy!" repeated Rosalthe, who had attentively listened to the dame's relation—"Prophetic Heaven!—in the sacristy!"

"Bless me, child, what's the matter?" enquired the alarmed Agatha. "Have you ever seen any thing in the sacristy?"

"No, never," replied Rosalthe, recovering her emotion, "never have I seen any thing at the chapel."

"Neither have I," said Agatha, "and St. Mary forbid I should, for I am sure it would kill me."

"Not it," jokingly said Dusseldorf; "it takes something more substantial than a spirit to kill an old woman. But come,

let's have a cheerful blaze," throwing a log on the fire, "and believe my words, Agatha, no supernatural appearance will terrify you, unless you fancy it."

"I shall never put myself in the way of fancying it," said the dame; "for when it gets dark and gloomy without, I shall be content to stay——" in the cottage, she would have added, but turning her eyes to the casement, she uttered a loud shriek, and hid her face in her hands.

"For Heaven's sake, what is the matter?" anxiously enquired Dusseldorf, whilst the trembling Rosalthe threw her arms round the dame.

"I have seen——" faltered Agatha, still hiding her eyes; "I have seen——" and again she stopped.

"What have you seen, my beloved wife?" tenderly asked Dusseldorf; "tell me what you have seen, and why you are thus agitated?"

"Let Ulrica close the shutters, and I will tell you."

"I will close them myself," said Dusseldorf, rising.

"Oh, stay!—you must not!" exclaimed the dame, grasping his hand; "danger lurks around—you must not leave the cottage."

"And would you have me send Ulrica where I would not go myself?" reproachfully asked Dusseldorf; "terror surely has changed you, Agatha, or your heart never could have sanctioned such a wish."

"Go then," said the dame, "but should you see anything, be sure and do not touch it."

"Very well," laughingly rejoined the veteran; "I will obey my commander's orders, though it should be a woman.—Well, Agatha," returning and seating himself by the fire, "I have only seen the stars, and those you know I could not touch. But look up, the barricade is fixed, and the enemy cannot enter."

"You may joke," answered the trembling Agatha, whilst her pallid countenance plainly evinced her fears, "but as sure as death,

death, I saw a human face gazing through the window."

"Upon a cow's shoulders?" gravely interrupted Dusseldorf.

Rosalthe smiled, but Agatha shook her head in silence. No sooner had they retired to rest, than Rosalthe invoked the aid of reason, and strove to repel the encroaching fantasy of superstition; but still the voice she had heard in the chapel, and the figure she had seen, filled her with amazement: to what to attribute it she knew not—her good sense rejected the idea of supernatural agency, yet why a human being should at midnight gaze stedfastly upon her window, and pronounce her name in the chapel, she could not divine. Doubt rose upon doubt, until all yielding to exhausted nature, she sunk into the balmy slumbers of innocence.

In the morning she awoke refreshed, and beauteous as the new-blown rose, joined
her

her friends in the parlour. Dusseldorf vainly strove to laugh away the terrors of Agatha, for the dame still persisted in her last night's relation, and called the saints to witness the truth of the assertion.—As the sun slowly sunk behind the hills, the aged pair accompanied their beloved charge to St. Florensia, and restoring her to the protection of the Lady Abbess, ere the mists of night enveloped the earth, returned to the cottage.

CHAP. V.

“**H**OW wonderfully strong is the resemblance of your Rosalthe to the portrait of the Lady Adela!” observed the Count de Lindenthal, turning to his friend.

“Surely,” said Adelbert, starting from a reverie, “there never existed a second being so exquisitely lovely as Rosalthe!”

“Yes, there once existed that being,” rejoined Sigismar. “The same dove-like eyes—the same softness—the same expression—the same fascinating sweetness, glow in every varying tinge of the canvas, and disclose the soul of the original; but her’s
was

was a tale of woe—misfortune closed her hopes, and calamity her existence.”

“Who was the Lady Adela?” enquired Adelbert, “and wherefore art thou so interested in her fate?”

“She was my sister,” replied Sigismar, mournfully—“my innocent, lovely, unoffending sister; but an impenetrable mystery, which time alone can elucidate, closely envelopes her destiny.”

“Until this moment I never knew thou hadst had a sister,” interrupted Adelbert, in a voice of astonishment.

“I never knew the value of a sister,” resumed the Count; “for ere I had acquired years to estimate the blessing, it was snatched from me, and doubt and incertitude remained. The Baron, who is the only being acquainted with her fate, cannot bear the subject; once I ventured to start it—once I entreated him to satisfy my fears—but, in the violence of passion, he spurned me from the chamber, and ordered me never to enter his presence until

I knew

I knew my duty. I flew to the housekeeper; she had resided in the family for many years, and had been the trusted favourite, nay almost friend, of the first Baroness—she listened to my tale, shook her head, and sighed. The melancholy import of her countenance convinced me she knew more than she thought proper to reveal. I solicited, and ere we parted, received the information I wished. She passed lightly over the death of the Baroness, but fully expatiated on the virtues and beauty of my ill-fated sister; she said, that never eyes beheld a more perfect form—that never heart sighed for a more heavenly disposition. She was the friend of the unfortunate—the soother of the afflicted—the humble imitator of the excellencies of her departed mother; ‘and yet she felt calamity,’ continued the housekeeper, whose words have ever been engraven on my memory, and I will repeat. ‘Often did she weep upon my bosom!—often did she talk of my sainted lady, and ask a thousand questions

questions dictated by filial tenderness? She was a child when death snatched the Baroness, but severely did she feel the loss—for her ideas and sensibility far exceeded her years. The Baron fondled and caressed her—called her his little darling—the tender pledge of his lost Beatrice—and appeared only to exist in her presence: but soon was his attention occupied by different objects—soon were his thoughts called from the hapless Adela, and she was sent for education to a neighbouring convent. About three years after the death of the second Baroness, who expired in presenting an heir to the estate, the Lady Adela returned to the castle; but never shall I forget the moment of her entrance—she seemed as an angel of peace descending to bless mankind. A tall and elegant stranger accompanied her to the gate, and bowing, took his leave. In crossing the forest, the carriage of the Lady Adela had been surrounded by banditti, and but for the timely interference of this stranger,

stranger,

stranger, she must have fallen a victim to their barbarity. For two years,' continued the good old Eldrude, 'peace smiled upon the castle, and then, all at once, the Lady Adela began to droop; a deep melancholy preyed upon her spirits, and her late healthful countenance wore the pallid hue, through which the rose displays a withering bloom. The Baron was gloomy, and looked as though suspicion lurked in his breast. His daughter wished to quit the castle to visit a distant friend, and for that purpose petitioned the Baron; he smiled at the application, and ere another week elapsed, in one of his frequent absences, the hapless sufferer removed from Lindenthal Castle. In three months, the Baron, returning in deep mourning, announced the death of the Lady Adela; the suit of apartments she had occupied, by the express orders of her father, were carefully secured, and from that period it has been a crime of the utmost magnitude to mention her

her name in his hearing.' Such was the account I received," concluded Sigismar, "and so interested was my heart in the relation, that it imbibed and cherished every syllable."

"There appears some very strange mystery," observed Adelbert.

"There does indeed," replied Sigismar; "and yet methinks I can solve it; methinks the living image of Adela cannot be the daughter of the peasant Dusseldorf."

Adelbert looked anxiously at his friend—a momentary joy suffused his features, and sparkled in his eyes; but the improbability of the assertion returned to his recollection, and again he sunk into sadness.

"The terror and agitation which Rosalthe betrayed at our first interview could not arise from accident," resumed the Count de Lindenthal; "no, no, my friend, she

she knows herself to be the child of mystery; but why she passes for the offspring of the cottagers, I cannot divine."

"*Rosalthe knows herself to be the child of mystery!*" reproachfully repeated Adelbert; "thou wrongest her; Rosalthe is as guileless as the new-born cherub — Rosalthe never could support disguise. And yet," he continued, after a pause, "once she denied not there was a secret; she even said, *however strong appearances might be, her heart would bear searching.*"

His head sunk upon his arm, and so seductive are the flights of fancy, that in a few moments he forgot where he was, or whither he was going. Rosalthe swam before him in all the dignity of birth, and the paternal arms of the Baron de Lunenberg encircled her as his daughter. His reverie was broken by Sigismar directing his attention to the distant towers of Berleberg, which leaving to the left, soon brought them in view of Lindenthal Castle — a
gloomy

gloomy and extensive building, scited on the banks of the Elbe, whose dark waves rolling in sullen majesty, on one side washed its foundation. The road led through a long avenue of cedars of Lebanon, which, in approaching, produced a fine effect—the deep shade of those solemn evergreens contrasting with the grey walls of the edifice. Adelbert beheld with admiration a range of gothic towers, which forming a kind of battlement, in part surrounded the castle, adding strength and grandeur to the appearance. The approaches towards the north-east and west were secured by a wide and deep moat, whilst on the south, as I before observed, the Elbe rolled her waters. It was late ere they entered the extensive court-yard of the castle, and the still gloom of night shadowing the indented turrets and heavy arches of the building, impressed every object with awful solemnity.

The Baron was from home—he had been
absent

absent some days, engaged in a hunting party in Hartz Forest; but Sigismar, with hospitable warmth, welcomed his friend, and leading him through a long range of arches, forming a kind of piazza, entered the hall. If before Adelbert admired the heavy grandeur of the castle, he now looked around with a mixture of awe and wonder. The hall, lined throughout with black marble, was of a circular form, but so extensive, that the eye could scarcely reach the opposite side; whilst in niches, formed by the massive columns which supported the roof, were seen figures, large as life, clothed in armour, and apparently guarding the apartment. The sound of their feet as they proceeded, reverberated on the ear, and the cheerful light of the lamps scarce penetrated the darkened extremities.

On reaching the upper end, Adelbert paused to admire a matchless piece of sculpture, representing Fame, crowning with laurel an expiring hero; whilst Victory, gazing

gazing on the group, hung over, weeping at the death of her favourite son. They soon reached the less grand but more comfortable sitting-room, and by the enlivening blaze of a cheerful fire, conversed of their absent friends.

Rosalthe again became the theme of discourse, and notwithstanding the fatigue of the journey, ere they separated for the night, at the request of Adelbert, Sigismar led to the stone gallery. Paintings by the most approved masters decorated the walls—but all were alike disregarded; for the eyes of Adelbert alone sought the portrait of the Lady Adela.

“Merciful Heaven, I do indeed behold Rosalthe!” he exclaimed, starting and gazing on the beauteous features of the picture, over which the sacred habit of a nun had thrown peculiar softness; her eyes were raised to Heaven—one hand was pressed upon her heart, and in the other she

she held a golden crucifix. "Powers of mystery! what am I to think?" continued Adelbert, tenderly perusing the features; "'tis the very image—'tis Rosalthe's self."

"No," whispered the Count, "'tis Rosalthe's mother."

"Impossible!" interrupted Adelbert.

"Why impossible?" asked the Count; "remember the mystery which envelopes the fate of my sister—remember the agitation betrayed by Rosalthe on hearing the name of De Lindenthal. But come, it grows late; let us retire, and to-morrow we will revisit the gallery."

Adelbert sighed, and casting a lingering look on the portrait, followed his friend. The apartment appropriated for his reception adjoined the deserted chambers once occupied by the Lady Adela; it was large and lofty, magnificently furnished, and hung with tapestry of the most vivid beauty. The exact proportion of the figures, and the interesting subject there

delineated, attracted the attention of Adelbert. In one part was exhibited the separation of a father and son from the arms of an affectionate family, and whilst the mother, drooping in sorrow, reclined on the bosom of her daughter, the sire's manly countenance expressed the painful struggles sustained between love and glory. Each distinct group appeared a continuance of the same subject, and approached nearer to painting than anything he had ever beheld. The next, traced the father and son, glowing with martial ardour, cased in the habiliments of war, and joining the standard of their sovereign ; and then, in the heat of battle, meeting carnage with undaunted bravery, and fighting side by side. Again, the well-tempered weapon of the sire was seen severing the uplifted arm of a veteran, which fell powerless at the feet of the monarch, at whose head the blow had been directed. Another remove, shewed the father receiving in his breast the deadly wound aimed by the rival chieftain at the heart

heart of his Prince; the next, shewed the son kneeling by the disfigured body of his father, and the Elector, with folded arms, gazing on them. The last was as the sculpture in the hall!—Fame crowning him with laurels, and Victory weeping the death of her favourite son.

“ Poor youth !” exclaimed Adelbert, deeply interested in the scenes displayed, and gazing on the expressive countenance of the son, in which distress and heroism were blended, “ thy path to glory is stained with a parent’s blood. Oh, Peace !—mild and heavenly guest, shed over our reign thy happy influence, and inspire our hearts with the blessed meed of content.”

The sullen murmur of the waves breaking against the walls of the castle, disturbed the stillness that reigned, and depressed the mind of Adelbert with pensive melancholy. He looked from the window, but night’s ebon wand spread a veil over human things,

and all was dark around ; no stars twinkled in the vast expanse—no moon shed a propitious ray—the wind blew chilly, and a heavy rain bubbled on the liquid surface of the Elbe. Adelbert retired hastily to rest ; a sudden heaviness weighed down his eye-lids, and sleep insensibly subdued every painful reflection : and whilst the glowing powers of imagination portrayed to his sanguine mind the beauteous form of his Rosalthe, we will review those dark ages, when frequent and internal commotions agitated with cruel discord the whole of the German empire.

Shrill was the blast of war which echoed through the confines of Saxony, and many a heart sank with horror—many a heart beat with heroism—many a doating mother parted from her darling son—many a tender bride hung weeping on the bosom of her husband. It was then that the Count de Lindenthal, accompanied by his heir, the youthful Xavier, tore himself from the embraces

braces of his family, and left his peaceful retirement to join the standard of the Elector, near Berleberg. The hero's heart, glowing with patriotism, banished the softer passion of love, and the ties of tender remembrance; he sighed for renown, conquest, immortality; he pointed out to his son the path to tread in, and as the hour of carnage arrived, "Remember," he exclaimed, "that Courage and Humanity are inseparable—that Mercy attends the hero's sword—that Mercy pours her healing balm into the wounded bosom, and spares the aged sufferer; remember that glory is the soldier's motto, and that life is but a tribute paid to his country."

The armies met—obstinate and vigorous was the engagement—for never were the laurels of victory more deeply tinged with human gore. Xavier performed all that Fame or his sire could require; but the falchion, grasped by the firmer hand of the Count, dealt destruction around. The

Elbe's wide banks were strewed with slain, and the waves rolled awfully, as the ensanguined stream mingled with the flood. The glare of day was passed, and evening's gloom was spread around—but even then the balance of victory had not preponderated; the groans of the dying mingled with the hollow murmur of the breeze, and Pity's self flew trembling from the deadly contest. Xavier, enfeebled by wounds, was maintaining an unequal conflict; the Count, in the momentary impulse of his heart, was rushing to the assistance of his son, but he beheld a sword aimed at the head of his sovereign: the father died in the patriot, and a well-aimed stroke severed the uplifted arm, which fell powerless at the feet of the Elector. Again his ready eye marked the dart of death directed at the heart of the Prince, and springing forward, he received the barbed arrow in his bosom. He sank on the shoulder of his son, who, weeping, sustained him in his arms, whilst the Elector, with sorrow, wonder, and gratitude,

tude, witnessed the struggles of the expiring hero. The trumpet of victory sounded—De Lindenthal raised his dim eyes to Heaven, and breathing an exclamation of joy, expired.

“The preserver of my life is placed beyond the reach of recompence,” exclaimed the Elector, “but he has left a representative, and yon princely domain,” pointing to the fortified towers of the castle, “henceforth known by the Barony de Lindenthal, I endow thee, brave youth, and thy heirs for ever, that to the latest ages it may stand a lasting monument of thy sire’s valour, and thy sovereign’s gratitude !”

Xavier bowed his head in token of respect ; he spoke not, for his heart was full, and his arms still encircled the bleeding body of his father.

“Thy grief and thy actions declare a noble mind,” continued the Elector ; “thou art

worthy to be called De Lindenthal: henceforth thou shalt be my friend, my counsellor—henceforth, in those measures which may promote the welfare and happiness of my people, thou shalt co-operate with me, and share, the dearest meed to a feeling heart, the blessings of thy country.”

Raised to the highest honours, the new-created Baron persevered in the glorious tract of his father's virtues, and the martial laurels which adorned his youthful brow, at once raised him the envy and admiration of the most experienced warriors. In the state, courage and patriotism alike marked his actions; never did he meanly court the favour of the Elector—never did he bribe the hearts of the people: supposing the interest of the Prince and the subject to be essentially the same, he strove to obtain their affection—to establish their honour, to promote their welfare. Never did he substitute caprice in the place of established laws, but often
would

would he strive to moderate their severity, when mercy could be administered, without an absolute perversion of justice.

Such was the conduct, such were the principles of the first Baron de Lindenthal; and for a series of years he received an adequate reward—a reward worthy of and acceptable to an exalted mind—his fellow-subjects' blessings, his sovereign's smiles. With eager strides he was proceeding in the arduous career of toils and perils, when Love, the tyrant of the heart, the lord of reason, checked the pursuit, and disclosed to his admiring eyes a being more seductive than Fame—a being whose affection was henceforth to be the very soul of his ambition:—that being listened to his tale—that being accepted his vows, and never did Hymen entwine softer bands.

In the retirement of Lindenthal Castle, years of peace and content fled rapidly away; and when the hour of death arrived, the Baron, with that fortitude inseparable

with a well-spent life, resigned his soul to his Creator, and left a son to inherit his titles, his honours, and his virtues.

Thus from generation to generation had the castle successively devolved, and each possessor, proud of the heroic deeds of his ancestors, strove, unimpaired, to transmit to the remotest period of time the sculpture and tapestry which delineated the magnanimity of a De Lindenthal.

The present Baron, on the death of his father, inherited his honours, but the widow's and the orphan's blessing attended not his elevation; he was proud, vindictive, ostentatious; never did he cast the offering of charity into the common current of human calamity, lest, in diffusing consolation to unknown distress, it should be carried beyond the reach of the world's knowledge. His bequests were ever thrown into still water, where the pleasing lustre of every object could be contemplated—
where

where the eyes of pride could gaze, and admire his munificence. His figure was tall and commanding—his countenance engaging—and a specious and insinuating behaviour veiled from the knowledge of a casual observer the deep and rancorous sentiments of his heart; but to the unhappy slaves of his caprice, he was the unbending tyrant—and when the mask of dissimulation was thrown aside, he trampled alike on justice and humanity, and hesitated not to sacrifice to his own gratification the peace and interest of his subjugated tenantry.

At the Baron de Stellenheim's he first beheld his only daughter, the Lady Beatrice; her cheeks were pale as the snow-drop on the mountain, for sorrow had destroyed their roses, and the canker-worm of grief preyed upon her spirits: her form was light—her features faultless—and her large eyes shed over her divine counten-

ance a mild languor, which rendered her appearance unspeakably interesting. Struck with her beauty, her youth, and her affliction, (for who can behold affliction, and not participate?) the Baron de Lindenthal fancied he loved; and though with tears she implored him to withdraw his suit, yet, secure of the approbation of her father, he scrupled not to seize her hand, and exultingly lead to the altar a victim, whose heart drooped beneath the pressure of concealed sorrow, and who, in compliance with a father's supplications, yielded herself to his love.

Such was the mother of the no less unfortunate Adela. Patiently she submitted to the Baron's caprices, and for the sake of her darling infant, checked the rising murmurs of her heart, and smiled upon her imperious lord. Frequent were his absences from the castle, for desire had expired with the pursuit, and the neglected Beatrice

Beatrice was left to mourn her father's tyranny, and her husband's desertion. Novelty was the Baron's passion—

“For man, the lawless libertine, may rove,”

and innocence fell an unsuspecting victim to his wiles.

His second Baroness lived but to know herself a mother, and then expired, leaving her son, the infant Sigismar, a sacred bequest to his father's love. In this boy the Baron beheld the heir of his honours; and if his breast was susceptible of sensibility, he felt for him the tenderness of parental regard. On the Lady Adela's removal from the castle, his affection appeared to redouble; he forgot every other object, and lived but for the welfare of his son—and that son, the inheritor of the mild and amiable qualities of his mother, felt the gratitude due to his tenderness, and revered the supposed virtues of an indulgent father.

CHAP. VI.

“**T**HANK Heaven you are returned, my beloved Rosalthe!” said the Abbess, pressing her to her bosom. “I know not how it is, but methinks I have imbibed Sister Josepha’s fears, for my heart feels not at ease in your absence. Tell me,” and she gazed tenderly in her face, “does my child with cheerfulness rejoin our society?”

Rosalthe started—a crimson blush suffused her countenance—she looked anxiously at the Abbess, on whose features concern and sorrow were strongly marked,
and

and throwing her arms around her neck, and hiding her burning cheeks on her bosom, acknowledged the vows of constancy and love she had exchanged with the Count Adelbert, the brother of their loved Angela, and the Baron de Lunenberg's heir.

"Did he, as the supposed daughter of Dusseldorf, offer to make you his wife?" fearfully interrogated the Superior. "Did he honourably and unconditionally offer you his hand?"

"He did," fervently replied Rosalthe; "the heart of Adelbert is incapable of deceit."

"Generous youth!" interrupted the Abbess.

Rosalthe's bosom glowed at the encomium — "He spoke to his father," she mournfully resumed, "but the Baron rejected the petition, and without his concurrence sooner would I die than enter the family."

"You are right, my child; persevere in
a laudable

a laudable pride," said the Superior, her eyes sparkling with animation, "for the hour approaches when the prejudices of the Baron shall be refuted—when dignity shall not blush at an alliance with Rosalthe de Stellenheim. But hark! the bell announces the hour of devotion—let us go, my daughter—this night does our sister Josepha, recovering from illness, return thanks to a kind and merciful Providence."

"Has sister Josepha been ill?" enquired the sympathizing Rosalthe.

"In mind and body," replied the Abbess; "but see, yonder she enters the chapel."

The arm of a nun supported her tottering steps, and her eyes in meek humility rested on a crucifix which impended from her waist. As the notes of the organ sweetly swelled, and the voices of the nuns joined in the strain, Josepha, looking up, beheld Rosalthe kneeling by the grave of Adela. A momentary pleasure enlivened her eyes—alas! it was but momentary, for a tear quickly

quickly succeeded, and again they sank in despondency. At the conclusion of the service Rosalthe flew to her friend and counsellor.

“ Since we parted, my dear child, I have suffered much in sickness and sorrow,” said the nun, as they entered her cell ; “ but thanks to our Heavenly Father, I am restored to a life of penance and prayer.”

“ And does the Being, who spares and takes life—who has placed us on earth for wise and hidden purposes, require our days to be labour and woe ?” enquired Rosalthe. “ Does he require us to linger, to endure, and to die ?—Ah, no !” and she pressed the cold hand of the devotee ; “ are we not rather taught to partake of the enjoyments of innocence, to fulfil the doctrine of our faith, to share the social virtues of society ?”

“ Rosalthe,” said the nun, in an austere voice, “ what envenomed tongue has whispered this dangerous sophistry in thine ear ?

ear?—Tell me,” and she looked sternly in her face, “from whence arose the suggestion?”

“From my own heart,” mildly answered Rosalthe.

“Ah, no!” rejoined the nun; “say from the seducer of thy heart, and I will believe thee. Was it at the chapel that thy eyes beheld the deceiver?—Was the broken altar profaned by his perjured vows?—Did he tell thee that the lily spread her virgin whiteness on thy bosom—that the rose dappled her carnation on thy cheek—that thy eyes rivalled the sparkling lustre of the diamond—that thy form was sylph-like and celestial?—Did he tell thee that he loved to adoration—that he existed but in thy presence?—Did he kneel—did he supplicate thee to return his passion—and when in bashful modesty the confession trembled on thy lips, did he bid thee carefully bury it in thy own heart from the knowledge of thy unsuspecting parents?—Did he, say, did he, Rosalthe?” and she grasped

grasped her hand, whilst down her pallid cheek the tears of sorrow and contrition flowed.

“Alas! what mean you?” articulated Rosalthe, who with astonishment beheld her agitation.

“Oh, injured and hapless sex!” pursued sister Josepha, regardless of the enquiry of Rosalthe, “whose beauty is their destruction—whose sensibility is their bane—who imbibeth the dangerous tale of flattery, and smileth on the seducer. Will not example warn them from misery?—Will not the precepts of the deluded reach their hearts?—Must conviction flash like lightning on their brain—must it subdue their spirit, and bend them sorrowing to the grave?—Vice,” and she raised her clasped hands to Heaven, “may for a time banish reflection—thought may be lulled in fatal security—but the hour at length arrives when dissipation and sensual indulgence ceases to captivate—when the slave of intemperance awakens to the bitter forebodings of an
hereafter,

hereafter, and in the anguish of a breaking heart acknowledges there is no peace for the wicked. Go, my daughter—my mind is oppressed—solitude alone can calm its emotion, and restore its complacency; yet, ere thou leavest me, remember those vows which are the most violent are not the most lasting—remember that the river, confined within its banks, runs smoothly along—but when the barrier is broken, when it inundates the surrounding country, the rays of the sun dry it up, and its very existence is forgotten.”

“Poor Sister Josepha!” sighed Rosalthe, as she proceeded to her chamber; “some sad, some dire calamity has destroyed thy quiet, and deprived thee of all relish for society: yet, methinks prejudice blinds thy reason—methinks thou art unjust to the world—surely in its intercourse virtue may remain unpolluted, innocence may escape uninjured.”

Rosalthe judged of the world she had
seen

seen—of Dusseldorf's cottage—of Lunenberg Castle ; and as imagination dwelt on the elegant form, the prepossessing countenance, the ardent manner of Adelbert, her heart condemned the indolence of retirement, and whispered, that a useful, an active life, would not be less acceptable in the eyes of our Creator.

A month had already elapsed since Rosalthe's return to the convent, and she had not heard from Dresden. A thousand nameless fears, succeeding each other, filled her mind with despondency ; sometimes she fancied Angela, in the pursuit of pleasure, had forgotten her friends in Lower Saxony ; sometimes the dread of banditti, the horror of accident, darting athwart her brain, filled her with presaging alarm ; but oftener, with a tenderness which seemed to reproach his long absence, would her thoughts rest on her lover !—Often would she retrace the happy hours passed in his society,

society, and then weep at the unsurmountable obstacles which destiny had placed to their union.

From the Abbess and Sister Josepha she carefully concealed her dejection ; in their presence she endeavoured to suppress her sorrows—to stop the current of the bursting tear, or check the progress of the swelling sigh. “ But concealment, like a worm i'th' bud, preyed on her damask cheek,” and her fragile form evinced the force of mental disquietude.

“ Alas ! my dear child, I fear thou art ill,” exclaimed the anxious Agatha, whose walk frequently extended to St. Florensia. “ Tell me why thou lookest so drooping ?—Tell me what hangs so heavy on thy spirits ?—Say, Rosalthe,” and she wiped away a tear which started at the idea, “ what shall I say when Dusseldorf enquires after his darling ?”

“ Say

“ Say I am well,” replied Rosalthe, forcing a smile ; “ say that I long to see him ; say anything to make him happy.”

“ But what must I say to make myself happy ?” rejoined the dame, fixing her eyes on the pale countenance of her charge.

“ A whole month has passed,” said Rosalthe, endeavouring to change the conversation, “ since the Baron de Lunenberg quitted the castle ; I wish I knew when he would return.”

“ And then,” said Agatha, archly, “ thou wouldst tell me, I might be happy. Ah ! my dear child, now thou lookest like thyself, for the Count Adelbert could not have painted thy cheeks more than I have done. Well, don’t fear, it will not be long before he returns ; for if ever the heart of man could be fathomed, I am sure he wishes to repeat his evening visits to the chapel. Well, the Virgin grant that I may live to see thee the Countess de Lunenberg, and then thou knowest, in gratitude, *the chapel will be repaired, the altar-piece new painted,*
and

and devotional exercise renewed; old as I am, I will dance at the wedding, and Dusseldorf ——”

“You shall—you shall, my dear mother,” interrupted Rosalthe, placing her hand on the lips of the dame. “When I am Countess de Lunenberg, you and my good father shall do just as you please; but in pity’s sake don’t talk of it, for never shall we see the day.”

“Love works miracles,” replied the dame, nodding significantly; “and as my good man often tells me, those who live longest will see the most. But I must leave thee, for he promised to meet me at the foot of the hill, and it does not do to break appointments with one’s love.”

“Does he come so near, and yet return without seeing me?” reproachfully asked Rosalthe.

“When he was young he would have walked twenty miles to have seen a girl half so handsome as thou art; but, poor soul, he is not so active as he was, and besides,

sides,

sides, the whole of this morning he was working in the garden. But see, yonder comes the Lady Abbess, and, as I live, Dusseldorf with her. Fie—fie,” continued the dame, “thou art just come to contradict all I have been saying.”

“Ah, my dear father!” said Rosalthe, affectionately throwing her arms round his neck, “I knew you could not come to the foot of the hill without mounting it.”

“You are a coxer,” said the old man, tenderly patting her cheek; “though you might well call me *dear father*, if you knew what I had in my pocket.”

“What have you?” enquired Rosalthe.

“Ah, that’s the secret,” replied Dusseldorf. “Now can’t you guess?”

“No.”

“Do you think,” pursued the veteran, “that your absent friends have entirely forgotten you?”

“A letter!” repeated Rosalthe, in a voice of delight, as Dusseldorf drew a small packet from his pocket. The superscription was

the hand-writing of Angela; Rosalthe's eyes perused it, as though they would have dived into the contents.

“Come, dame, let us depart,” said the considerate Dusseldorf, “and leave our dear child to read her letter in comfort.”

No sooner had the cottagers quitted St. Florensia, than Rosalthe hastened to her chamber; and as her trembling fingers broke the seal, her heart beat high with the anticipated hope of its containing tidings concerning Adelbert. It was indeed from Angela, though not written in her usual spirits—for disappointment and dissatisfaction appeared in every line.

“The greatest pleasure in absence, my dear Rosalthe,” she wrote, “is that of addressing our friends; indeed I have many times longed to tell you all that has happened since we parted, but
now

now that I am seated at the desk, I scarce know where to begin. In the first place, our journey to Dresden was terrifying and disagreeable, for the country through which we passed was wilder than you can imagine, and the steep mountains, the dark rocks, and dismal forests, from which, at every opening, I expected to see tigers, wolves, or banditti rush out, filled my heart with apprehension, and made me sincerely wish I had never left Lunenberg Castle. I don't like Dresden half so well as I expected; at a distance its appearance is certainly noble; it stands on the banks of the Elbe, which, widening as it approaches, runs through the middle of the city: an elegant bridge, thrown across, has a fine effect, whilst mountains are seen rising on each side, some nearly bare, some covered with vineyards. I have seen the palace of the Elector, and I wished for you at the picture gallery, which I am told is one of the finest in the world.

“The gratifying reception I met with at

court, and all the fine parties I have attended, will serve for conversation when we meet. The Prince de Lobenstein has taken great pains to show me all the public places, and we have passed a week at his beautiful villa, about a league from Dresden. You would have been delighted, Rosalthe ; for even I, who never had any predilection for the country, was at first quite charmed with the scene : bubbling fountains, extensive lawns, waving woods, temples, grottoes, waterfalls, impressed my mind with the idea of primeval paradise—and I thought at the moment that the words of our holy mother, when she has said, that true happiness could not be found on earth, were already refuted. But it lasted not long, for methought there was something wanting ; I sighed, and a tear stole down my cheek—Alas ! I knew not for why—my heart fluttered, and another sigh succeeded. For worlds would I not have my father know it, yet I wish I had never quitted Lower Saxony. The Count de Lindenthal

Lindenthal has not yet joined us; and though I have seen a great many young noblemen, and have had some very fine things said to me, yet there is not one I like half so well as Sigismar, notwithstanding he never told me I was handsome. But I suppose my brother and he are so in love with your picture, that now the original is shut up in a convent, we shall never be able to draw them from the contemplation. Heigh ho!—I wish I was exactly like that picture!—Yet, don't think I envy you, Rosalthe, for there is not a being in the world I wish so happy. I seldom see the Prince de Lobenstein now; he says I have used him cruelly—poor silly man! He took it in his head, because I smiled and welcomed him as my father's guest, that I must love him. I suppose he can love who he pleases, but my heart is not so accommodating—if it was, I am sure I would love *one* who would prefer me to all the pictures in the stone gallery at Lindenthal Castle: but no matter,

I won't think of it again, excepting in my dreams, and Heaven knows those I cannot help.

“A few mornings ago the Prince de Lobenstein followed me into the music-room, and, after some little hesitation, said, that the future study of his life should be to promote the happiness of mine.

‘I have the most delightful plan, my dear Lady Angela,’ he continued, ‘after we are married.’

‘Married!’ I repeated in a voice of astonishment; ‘married!—sure you jest.’

‘Is there anything so extraordinary,’ resumed the Prince, ‘in the union of hands succeeding the union of hearts?—But hear my intentions, and don't interrupt me.’

“I assumed an air of seriousness, and his Highness proceeded.

‘I know your affection for Dusseldorf's beautiful daughter, and after we are married, Rosalthe shall, if she pleases, reside entirely with us.’

‘After *I* am married, Rosalthe shall reside

side with me,' I exclaimed, ' but I am sure she never will with *you* !'

' Why so confident ?' he enquired.

' Because——shall I tell you ?'

' Certainly.'

' Why then, because I never shall be the Princess de Lobenstein.'

' Come,' said the Prince, affecting a laugh, ' now you *jest*.'

' You wrong me—I am serious.'

' Have you ever seen any one you prefer ?' he enquired, with an air of chagrin.

' Yes, many.'

' How then am I to interpret your conduct ?'

' My conduct !' I repeated, smiling at the gravity of his aspect ; ' I do not understand you.'

' Have you not in actions—have you not in looks, a thousand times told me that you loved me ?'

' Never dreamt of such thing in my life,' interrupting him.

‘Then, by Heaven, Lady Angela, you are a most inexplicable being!’

‘No, I am not—all may be explained in a moment.’

‘What then may be your explanation?’ he enquired haughtily.

“I was piqued, and with a provoking smile replied—‘Your own vanity.’

“He bowed, I curtsied, and so the curtain dropped. But the Baron was not so easily satisfied—‘Refuse the Prince de Lobenstein!’ he exclaimed; ‘surely, Angela, you have lost your senses. What may be your motives?—for it is right I should know them.’

‘My first motive is, that I do not like the Prince; and my second,’ throwing my arms round his neck, ‘that I wish not to leave my father.’

‘And will this reason always exist, Angela?’ he enquired, looking stedfastly at me.

“In an instant my thoughts took wing
to

to Lindenthal Castle, and whilst my cheeks glowed with blushes, and my eyes sought the ground, my heart seemed to dictate, and my lips boldly pronounced—‘No.’

‘In whose favour will it change?’ resumed the Baron, regardless of my emotion. ‘Say, my child, may I not be admitted into your confidence?’

‘I—I—don’t know;’ and then, to change the conversation, I spoke of Adelbert and Sigismar’s procrastinated journey to Dresden.

‘You seem very anxious about their return,’ said the Baron, smiling; ‘but never fear, Angela, the Count will not leave his heart behind him.’

“I cannot think why my father smiled, or why he supposes I am anxious. What can Sigismar’s heart be to me?—I dare say he never thinks of Dresden, or any one that is in it. Well, after all, I believe I will be a nun, for then I shall have no pictures, nor no Count de Lindenthal to vex me. Heaven preserve you, my dear

Rosalthe—and Heaven preserve our dear mother, the Abbess, and all the dear sisters of St. Florensia—and that I may speedily return to their society, is the constant prayer of their affectionate

ANGELA.”

As Rosalthe concluded the letter, her heart sank with disappointment; the fondly-cherished hopes of its containing intelligence of Adelbert had proved fallacious, and tears of regret stole silently down her cheeks. Long was it ere she regained sufficient composure to join the Abbess, and even then the traces of sorrow could not be concealed from her friend.

“Poor Angela!” said the Superior, returning the letter, “how often does disappointment expunge the highly-finished colourings of fancy!—She pictured Dresden the seat of happiness, and scarce a month

month has elapsed, ere she sighs for the very retirement she has left. Hope's fairy visions dwindle in the possession, for never are they transferred from imagination to reality without a considerable loss; and yet, if mankind were to be deprived of the chimera, what but misery would remain for them in the world."

"Angela anticipated delight in the pursuit of pleasure," said Rosalthe.

"Then her expectations were built upon a sandy foundation," returned the Abbess; "for pleasure is so unsubstantial, that to retain peace we must be content to skim on the surface. Well may the world's pleasures be compared to quicksands, over which a man may lightly pass without danger; but if he ventures to pause, they sink beneath his feet, and he is lost."

"The Virgin preserve me from such pleasures!" said Rosalthe, fervently.

"Nay, do not mistake me, my child," rejoined the Superior; "there are laudable and innocent pleasures, of which the purest

hearts may partake without danger. In an intercourse with the world, hourly may we behold suffering merit; and to a mind like yours, my daughter, can there be a greater gratification than wiping the tears of anguish from the eyes of the unfortunate?"

Rosalthe, thankful for the good opinion of the Abbess, silently raised her hand to her lips, whilst, with a half-suppressed sigh, the Superior proceeded—

“Angela’s discontent betrays its source to every one but herself. Alas! I fear her guileless heart has imbibed a passion, which will colour with bliss or disappointment the whole of her future life. She loves the Count de Lindenthal—Nay, do not start, Rosalthe, for both my children have embarked on the same tempestuous ocean—may favourable breezes waft them to their promised haven—may no dire blasts crush the blooming hopes of expectation, or dash to the ground the uplifted cup of joy!”

“My

“My mother!” exclaimed Rosalthe, fearfully gazing at the tearful eyes of the Abbess, “you are affected—you speak from the knowledge of experience.”

“Heaven knows, I do,” resumed the Superior; “Heaven knows, I have felt the dreadful transition from joy to agony—from hope to despair: but it is passed—religion softens woe, and like a cherub points to distant never-ending peace. Leave me, Rosalthe—when we meet in the chapel, my spirits will have regained their usual composure.”

“Go,” said Sister Josepha, who entering had heard the last words of the Abbess; “go, but remember that affliction’s bitterest pang is bliss compared to the goading of an oppressed conscience.”

CHAP. VII.

ON the fourth day succeeding the arrival of Sigismar and Adelbert at Lindenthal Castle, the clattering of horses in the courtyard announced the return of the Baron. With affection he embraced his son—with hospitable warmth he welcomed the Count; yet, notwithstanding the ingratiating and polite affability of his manners, Adelbert felt not at ease in his society. There appeared in the disposition of the Baron a something uncongenial to the open benevolence of his own heart—a something which shrunk from the keen glance of penetration, which carried the sneer of irony, and

and the malignity of revenge. His form was tall and athletic, and though age had not destroyed the stamp of manly beauty, yet a dark and lowering frown contracted his brow. He had never felt the pressure of affliction, or the infirmities of age, and he looked as though he defied the one, and thought not of the other.

It was late ere they separated for the night, for as Adelbert closed the door of his chamber, the castle clock struck one. He thought no more of the Baron—he thought alone of Rosalthe; and as his head pressed his pillow, imagination led him back to Lunenberg Castle—to the ruined chapel of St. Florensia—to the cottége of Dusseldorf. Again did he see her captivating countenance—again did he hear the thrilling accents of her voice, when, with a blushing cheek, she first acknowledged her love—every smile, every tear, memory carefully retraced. Again did he reflect upon her agitation at the first appearance
of

of De Lindenthal; again did he seek to solve the mystery which apparently enveloped her fate.

“Even here, adored Rosalthe,” he exclaimed, “can I gaze upon thy charms!—Even here can thy image be perpetually before me!—For hadst thou sat for the portrait in the gallery, it could not have more resembled thee. Yet it is strange,” he continued, musing, “that this picture should be at Lindenthal Castle—that Rosalthe should have betrayed such emotion at the name, and yet so solemnly aver she never had seen Sigismar. What may I think?” he continued, as the words of the Count crossed his memory. “The Lady Adela the mother of my Rosalthe!”

At that instant a deep and unusual sound reached his ear. He started erect in his bed; he listened, but silence reigned around, save the Elbe's rough waves breaking against the walls of the castle.

“ Ah, no! Sigismar,” composedly replacing his head on the pillow, “ it is impossible; in me the idea might have been the offspring of hope, but in thee it is the chimera of a romantic imagination. Dusseldorf is the parent of Rosalthe, and destiny, in the ambition of my father, has placed an insurmountable bar to my happiness.”

As he was sinking into repose, a repetition of the same noise again disturbed him; it seemed to proceed from the deserted apartments once occupied by the Lady Adela. Long and uninterrupted was the sound, and as he gazed around, a faint gleam of light penetrating the tapestry, shone momentarily in the chamber, and vanished; the harsh grating of a door succeeded, and in the space of a second all was hushed in silence: but the shackles of sleep were broken, and Adelbert, unable to solve the anxious and quick-revolving doubts of his mind, lay musing on what he
had

had heard. Again did he recapitulate the relation of Sigismar—again did he reflect on the mysterious death of the Lady Adela, and the inexplicable conduct of the Baron. The noise certainly proceeded from the ruined chambers, and was sufficient to convince him they were not so deserted as his friend had taught him to suppose. He carefully buried his doubts in his own breast, and in the morning joined the Baron and Sigismar, with a countenance of unconcern.

The two succeeding nights were passed in watching, but no sound disturbed the death-like silence of the midnight hour. Adelbert, inwardly acknowledging the delusions of fancy, attributed the whole to the disorder of his mind. He knew that dreams frequently bear an affinity with the waking ideas, and that those objects which most attract the notice, or press heaviest on the spirits, often dressed by imagination, appear in various forms when sleep
hath

hath closed the eyes ; sometimes engaging us in a pursuit—sometimes mocking us with disappointment. He had thought of Rosalthe—he had suffered the groundless suggestion of his friend to take root in his mind, and might not that mind, thus tinctured with improbability, have yielded to the force of fancy.

Such were the conclusions of Adelbert, as on the third night he reclined on his bed ; but scarce had the castle clock struck one, when a footstep in the adjoining chamber confirmed the reality of what he had considered ideal. He gazed eagerly round the apartment, for his light still burned upon the table. A door closed violently, and part of the tapestry at the further end of the room was agitated with unusual motion. He sprung from the bed, and as he approached the spot, the distant murmur of a human voice reached his ear.

“ All is not right ! ” he exclaimed, striking
ing

ing his hand against the wall; the sound was hollow, as though a door was concealed behind the arras: raising it, he discovered what he had suspected, but so strongly was it secured on the inside, that it resisted his every effort to burst it open. Disappointed, he was compelled to relinquish his design, and the remainder of the night passed in silence.

In the morning, when they met at the breakfast-table, Adelbert fixed his eyes on the Baron, and with an air of unconcern—"I thought," he said, "the apartments adjoining the one in which I sleep had been entirely uninhabited."

"Which chamber does your Lordship occupy?" enquired the Baron.

"That which overlooks the Elbe, on the north side of the castle," replied Adelbert.

"The one," interrupted the Count de Lindenthal, "next to the suit in which my unfortunate sister Adela resided."

"Sigismar," said the Baron, in a tone
of

of displeasure, "had a domestic dared to have named that being, my vengeance would have reached him. You know my order; once you broke the law, and I pardoned you, but remember a third offence will not meet with such clemency."

"Last night," rejoined Adelbert, earnestly regarding the Baron, "a few moments after the clock struck one, I heard a strange noise in those apartments, and I could distinguish the sound of footsteps, the closing of a door, and the distant murmur of a voice."

"There is a mystery," exclaimed Sigismar, heedless of his father's presence, "which I cannot solve; but as I hope for mercy, I believe Adela ——"

"Rash boy!" vociferated the enraged Baron, "quit the apartment; nor, by a longer stay, compel me to have you dragged from my presence."

"'Tis well you are my father," said the Count, as his eyes darted indignation; "never will I forget the deference I owe you;

you ; but know, my Lord," and his hand rested on his sword, " that the man who attempts the execution of that order lives not to perform it."

" Sigismar," said the Baron, in milder accents, " your warmth is unbecoming ; you have uttered words which your judgment must condemn. Tell me the mystery which exists, and on whom rests your suspicions ; if on the Baron de Lindenthal, it is right he should exculpate his conduct. The Count de Lunenberg has heard the insinuation, he also shall hear the explanation."

" My suspicions rest not on the Baron de Lindenthal," boldly replied Sigismar ; " his honour is sacred as my own ; and though with the tenderest affection of a son I regard him, sooner would I see him dead, than see it tarnished."

" Proceed," said the Baron.

" You will calmly hear me?—You desire me to speak ?"

" I do," said the Baron, impatiently.

" Well

“ Well then, my father,” resumed Sigismar, “ at Lunenberg Castle I beheld the exact, the living resemblance of my sister’s portrait.”

“ Is that all?” interrupted the Baron, with an ironical smile.

“ No,” answered Sigismar, “ that is not all. This angelic being is the child of mystery ; and when the name of De Lindenthal first reached her ear, breathing an exclamation of horror, she fainted.”

“ Ah !” ejaculated the Baron, as an ashy paleness o’erspread his features. “ The child of mystery, say you ?—The exact resemblance of the portrait in the gallery ?—What is she ?—Who is she ?—Know you her name ?—Where can I find her ?—Has she a mother ?”

“ She has,” replied the Count.

“ Prophetic Heaven !” again interrupted the Baron, with a start of terror.

“ And a father !” exclaimed Adelbert, who till then had been a silent witness of the scene.

“ A father !”

“ A father !” repeated the Baron, recovering himself ; “ a father !—what is his name ?—though it is strange,” with an assumed air of indifference, “ I should feel so interested in the concerns of a stranger.”

“ Dusseldorf, an aged and respected veteran, is the father of Rosalthe,” answered Adelbert.

“ What, the peasant Dusseldorf, whose cottage stands on the plain near the convent of St. Florensia ?” questioned the Baron, in a voice of astonishment.

“ The same,” replied Adelbert.

“ And the dame Agatha is the mother of this paragon ?” resumed the Baron.

“ She is ; but excuse me, my father,” said Sigismar, “ in confessing your knowledge of the parents of Rosalthe fills me with surprise.”

“ It is of no consequence,” exclaimed the Baron. “ I wish to learn,” gazing haughtily on his son, “ what connexion subsists between the little rustic daughter
of

of Dusseldorf, and the supposed mysteries at Lindenthal Castle."

"My sister, at the awful period of her decease, was absent from the castle," said Sigismar.

"She was," replied the Baron, "but that is going from the point."

"If I wrong her, may Heaven pardon me!" rejoined Sigismar; "but the first hour I beheld Rosalthe at the castle of the Baron de Lunenberg, my heart whispered we were related—my heart whispered that in her I saw the child of the unfortunate Adela."

"Surmise, and the casual view of an object bearing some resemblance to the portrait in the gallery, is then the groundwork of your suspicions?" said the Baron, with a sarcastic smile. "Perhaps, as your ideas are already tinged with romance, you can without difficulty solve the apparent mystery of the strange and inexplicable sounds heard in the deserted apartments."

“For those I cannot account,” gravely replied Sigismar.

“Perhaps,” returned the Baron, with a contemptuous sneer, “it is the spirit of the Lady Adela, come to acquaint us of what in her life she dared not—that through her the family honour had been sullied, and that a living witness of her shame exists in the acknowledged offspring of the peasant Dusseldorf. But let me advise you in future, Sigismar,” continued the Baron, in a voice of severity, “to erect your ideas upon a more solid foundation, or at least to conceal within your own breast the wild chimeras of your distempered brain; for know that none but a father would admit with impunity of such insinuations.”

This conversation sank deep in the heart of Adelbert; he had marked the varying countenance of the Baron, and saw through the mask of indifference a keen and designing interest. Yet he knew not what
to

to think; he felt it ungenerous to condemn a being without the proof of conviction, and all that he could glean was drawn from the shallow grounds of suspicion. The noise he had twice heard in the deserted chambers he was convinced arose not from fancy, but how it could have any connexion with Rosalthe he was unable to discover. A deep mystery certainly enveloped her fate, but never had he been entrusted with the knowledge; he felt her want of confidence, and sighed; yet he had promised, not even in thought, to hover near her secret—but he felt that circumstances warranted the application, and he determined, ere he repaired to Dresden, to visit the cottage of Dusseldorf, to declare his doubts, and implore an explanation.

“ Perhaps,” he exclaimed, as a momentary joy suffused his countenance, “ the objections of my father may be removed—perhaps the parents of Rosalthe were noble as my own—perhaps Providence has ap-
1 2 pointed

pointed me the happy instrument to replace her in her birthright !”

Again his mind returned to the adventure of the night ; he had concealed his discovery of the secret door from the knowledge of the Baron, and determined, if possible, to penetrate into the chambers, and satisfy himself as to the cause. There seemed to be a strange coincidence of events working for some secret end ; imperceptibly he appeared to have been drawn into the scrutiny, and his heart whispered—Rosalthe would be the recompence. On meeting at dinner, the Baron had recovered his cheerfulness ; he spoke with his usual ease, and when they parted for the night, appeared to have forgotten the displeasure of the morning.

No sooner was the castle hushed in silence, than Adelbert raised the tapestry, and with persevering strength at length completed his arduous task—the door burst
from

from its hinges, and seizing the light he passed through the opening; but no living object met his view—melancholy reigned around, and his eyes, in disappointment, wandered o'er the superb furniture of the apartment. A harp stood near a table, on which was scattered a few half-finished drawings.

“Alas!” sighed Adelbert, “the fingers which traced these outlines have long been stiffened in death. Poor Lady Adela—lovely as my Rosalthe, she fell the unresisting victim of sorrow!”

He passed through three different apartments opening from each other, and in the last saw a curious cabinet, in which, on examining, among various other things, he found a small pocket-book; anxious to gain some clue to the story of Adela, he eagerly opened it, but finding it contained only an almanack, threw it aside disappointed. Entering the outer chamber, he

again looked over the drawings, and found among them part of a letter, which had before escaped his observation. Eager to peruse the paper, he returned to his own chamber, and closing the door as well as he was able, and replacing the tapestry, seated himself at the table. The signature was torn away, but his heart being interested in the contents, he, with some difficulty, made out the following letter.

“ When I quitted you at the drawbridge, I fled hastily through the forest—my mind agonized with the secret you had revealed. I knew not whither I went, for the imprecations of the Baron seemed to pursue me. ‘ Is it in nature to have formed so vindictive a father ?’ I exclaimed, as imagination retraced the scene you had so feelingly pictured. I saw my Adela upon her knees, her white hands raised in supplication—I saw the tears which bedewed her lovely cheeks

cheeks—I heard the sighs which swelled her bosom—I heard the faltering accents of her lips, as she entreated her father not to force her into the miseries of a compulsory union. He frowned, he spurned the trembling suppliant, and, in the supposed lover, cursed the devoted husband. Had he known that our love had been sanctioned by the rites of marriage—had he known that the heir of his enemy claimed the daughter of a De Lindenthal for his bride, ruin, despair, murder, would have blasted our hopes, and have involved us in anguish. Oh, fatal contention!—cruel, deplorable enmity!—How often dost thou entail misery upon an unoffending posterity!—How often dost thou harden the heart of beauty, and shield it against all but love!—Even you, my Adela, gentle, tender, compassionate as the dove—when I threw off concealment, when I acknowledged my name, started with momentary horror—called me the son of the unrelenting persecutor of your family, and

bade me by flight save myself from danger: but in pronouncing the last sentence your eyes betrayed grief and sorrow. ‘ You have heard me!’ I exclaimed, forcibly retaining your hand—‘ Ah, do not, Adela, repent the mercy granted to a stranger!—Do not turn from a lover, who will sacrifice all for you—who will smother the seeds of passion in his breast, and sue for your hand, even from the haughty Baron de Lindenthal.’—‘ Ah! why have you thus long concealed your name?’ you articulated; ‘ it would have warned me had I known it,’ and a sigh swelled your bosom, ‘ to have fled from you—it would have screened me from the misfortunes I too justly apprehended.’ The transport with which the latent meaning of these words inspired me filled me with hope; I no longer thought of the Baron—I no longer thought of the possibility of a disappointment: I read in the air of perplexity and confusion which you wore, a heart beating in unison with my own—a heart

heart struggling with the expiring influence of prejudice. Ah! how lovely did that perplexed air—that sweet, that innocent confusion, make you appear!—How often did I wish to press you to my bosom!—How often did I wish to tear you from a father, whose harsh and uncongenial soul merited not such a daughter!—How swift did the moments fly at the cell of Father Lawrence!—How often did I wait your arrival!—How often did I pace the smooth banks of the rolling Elbe, and watch with fearful eyes the well-known path to the castle!—How often did the hoary friar warn us of the dangers of our fate!—How often did he weep at our sorrows, and deplore the obduracy of the Baron!—But we felt not his fears, we smiled at the threatened danger; the pleasure of loving, and being beloved, filled our whole hearts—no apprehensions, no suspicions, disturbed the tender softness of our interviews—we were secure of each others affection, and this certainty added to all the charms of confi-

dence, to all the sweets of hope. Long did we combat the objections of the holy Lawrence!—Long did he resist our prayers, our entreaties! He acknowledged the injustice of the Baron, but as thy father, Adela, he wished to recal thee to obedience—he wished to eradicate the seeds of affection from our nature, and inspire us with the cowl's frigidity. 'Thou knowest not the force of love,' I exclaimed, 'or such doctrine would have been withheld.' He looked at thee, my blushing love—his head sunk upon his bosom—he clasped his withered hands, and a struggling sigh burst forth. Never shall I forget the solemn fervour of his manner when pronouncing the awful ceremony!—Never shall I forget his countenance, when thy white hand, disrobed of thy glove, was extended to receive the badge of our nuptials!—His voice faltered as his eyes rested on the bracelet which encircled thy wrist—a hectic flush tinged his sallow features, and a big tear, rolling down his cheek,
fell

fell on the opened page. Alas! Father Lawrence has known sorrow; perhaps he has felt the ardour of love, but, unlike us, has been the victim of disappointment—perhaps no sympathetic bosom returned his passion—perhaps, the sport of destiny, he was severed in early youth from the object of his adoration. Shall I, my Adela—my chosen tender wife, confide the secret to his care?—Shall I entreat his confidence, his protection, his advice?—His sacred order guards him from the vengeance of the Baron. Perhaps to his interference we may owe the preservation of a being, dear—ininitely dear to the hearts——”

Here the letter was torn, and the disappointed Adelbert was compelled to resign the expectation of elucidating the fate of Adela. He carefully treasured up the paper, and determined in the morning to seek the cell once occupied by Father

Lawrence; and if the *religieux* was still in existence, to hint his doubts, to acknowledge his discovery of the secret door, and to entreat his confidence relative to the marriage of the Lady Adela, the suspected birth of an infant, and the sad and mysterious circumstances attending her death.

“ Perhaps,” he exclaimed, and Hope again darted her fallacious rays, “ on my return to Lunenberg Castle, thousands may hail my beauteous Rosalthe, the admired grand-daughter of the Baron de Lindenthal!—Perhaps my father, glorying in the early steady choice of his son, may seek to obliterate the past, by suing her virtues to grace the dignified honours of his illustrious house.”

Such were the waking dreams of Adelbert, and so apt are we to believe what we wish, that every remaining difficulty disappeared at the approach of morning; and when he quitted the castle, for the purpose

of seeking the cell, scarce a possibility of a disappointment lingered in his breast. He forgot the many years which had elapsed since the letter had been written, and the probability of the friar, aged even in the youth of Adela, having long since returned to his kindred earth. Forming rich scenes of future happiness, Adelbert pursued a beaten tract on the banks of the Elbe—sometimes o’ershadowed with the spreading branches of the lofty linden, sometimes hedged by the clustering boughs of the verdant holly, now mounting the rugged rock, now descending the fertile valley, he passed swiftly on, when the appearance of a peasant driving a flock of goats down an adjacent hill, induced him to enquire the path to the hermitage.

“Sure you must be a stranger in these parts,” replied the rustic, “or you would know the cell of Friar Lawrence; every one visits it, for the good man has a multitude of friends. But, poor soul! though
almost

almost doubled with age, he was not satisfied to die among our mountains; but, from some strange dream or vision, as he calls it, must needs quit his cell, and set out on a pilgrimage to St. Lauretta."

"Then he is absent from the hermitage?" interrupted Adelbert.

"Oh, yes!" replied the goatherd; "it is above a month since he quitted his cell, and the Virgin alone knows how he will support the hardships of the approaching winter. He talked much of returning, but St. Lauretta I am sure must receive his bones, for he can never live to come back."

Adelbert left not the peasant, until having given him substantial proofs of his bounty; and then, followed by his blessings, mournfully retraced his steps to the castle.

CHAP. VIII.

“ I HAVE received a petition for which I was not prepared, my dear child,” said the Abbess, as Rosalthe entered the parlour. “ Dusseldorf informs me that your good dame is ill, and requires your attendance. Go, my daughter, to the cottage—gratitude is a sacred bond which should ever be fulfilled—it should influence our every thought, and through life be the guide of our actions; go, and by assiduous duty, by tender and persevering care, lighten the lingering hours of sickness, and in part discharge the great debt you owe.”

“ That I never, never can,” replied Rosalthe,

salthe, tears streaming down her cheeks ;
“ not the services of a long life can repay
what I owe to you, my beloved father : to
you, holy and revered mother, I acknow-
ledge the debt—I feel the incapability of a
return.”

She paused, and taking the hand of Dusseldorf and the Superior, pressed them fervently to her lips. The Abbess was affected—she turned aside her head to conceal her emotion ; but Dusseldorf, incapable of restraint — Dusseldorf, who ever acted from the warm impulse of his heart, snatched his adopted child to his bosom, and upon her polished forehead imprinted a grateful kiss.

“ What ails my mother ?—How long has she been ill ?—Has Father Anselmo seen her ?” enquired Rosalthe, affectionately returning his salute.

“ No,” answered Dusseldorf ; “ we will go home by the cliff, and call at the hermitage :

mitage: I trust the holy father's skill, and our attendance, will soon restore our worthy Agatha to health, and to us."

"With the approbation of Heaven, I hope they may!" [said the Superior, gravely; "'tis from thence that mercy flows—from thence alone we must look for it."

Dusseldorf stood reproved, whilst Rosalthe, anxious to behold the dame, quitted the parlour to prepare for her departure.

"Why so sorrowful?" asked Sister Josepha, meeting her in the passage.

"My dear mother is ill," replied Rosalthe, "and my father is come to take me to the cottage."

"Ill!" repeated the nun, despair shadowing her features; "ill—go—fly—attend her—watch her—soothe her—blessed office!—and I—I will pray for her!"

"Thank you!—thank you!" gratefully repeated Rosalthe; but the sister was gone,
and

and so absorbed was she by her own ideas, that the wild and energetic manner of the recluse had not been observed; and when she rejoined the veteran in the parlour, the very recollection of the interview was obliterated.

How different were the scenes which the opening gate of the convent disclosed, to those upon which it had shut on her last entrance. Then, summer's gay livery adorned every feature of the landscape—the trees bent under their clustering treasures—the birds carolled in wild frolic—the earth was spangled with a thousand variegated beauties. Now, autumn's sombre gloom was spread around—the birds no longer sported in the branches—the forests were no longer enriched with verdure—half-stript, the yellow leaves waved in the air, or lay rustling in heaps on the roots from which they once had flourished.

“Such is the lapse of time!” said Dusseldorf,

seldorf, as he marked the eyes of Rosalthe wandering over the scene ; “ such the autumn of our lives !—’Tis then, when the hey-day of youth is passed, that, like yon trees, we are stript of our boasted beauties, and rendered, as I am now, feeble, old, and useless. But here ends the simile—for a renovating sun will open anew the blossom, and yearly cover with smiles the face of vegetation ; but with man, one change alone remains—his hours of youth can no more return—his days of bliss are passed for ever—that change is awful—that change is death. May I,” and he raised his eyes in pious resignation to Heaven, “ ever view it as the passport to a better world—as the termination of sorrow, perplexity, and anguish !—But see, my child, we are arrived at the hermitage ; do you not feel thankful for the interruption?—I think I have tired you with moralizing.”

“ Indeed you have not,” said Rosalthe ; “ it is a subject to a reflecting mind the most interesting—a subject which, when
I have

I have gained the respected epoch you have painted, I hope I may speak of with as much calmness. But do not come any farther—remain on the bridge, and I will knock at the door—perhaps Father Anselmo may be from home—it is not often that he is to be found at this hour.”

Rosalthe's prognostic was soon verified; the hermitage was deserted; in vain she sought the holy inhabitant in the chapel, the refectory, the garden—he was no where to be seen, and she rejoined the disappointed Dusseldorf at the bridge.

“Poor, poor Agatha!” he exclaimed; “how very unfortunate!—But sure, Rosalthe, I see some one yonder climbing the rock; let us wait, perhaps it is the father.”

“It is only a goat browsing on the pasturage,” said Rosalthe.

“A goat,” repeated Dusseldorf, smiling; “alas! my poor eyes—too sure they begin to fail me.”

“Come,

“Come, my father,” resumed Rosalthe, “the holy Anselmo’s office is beneficence; he is gone to visit some of his patients; let us hasten home, and at the hour of prayer this evening I will return and seek him.”

“Be it so, my child,” replied the good old soldier, “and as far as tenderness and attention will prevail, so far will we in the mean time alleviate the sufferings of Agatha.”

Softly Rosalthe ascended the stairs, and as she entered the chamber, the hand of the watchful Ulrica was extended as an emblem of silence. Approaching the bed, she started at the pallid countenance of the dame, whose eyes were closed in a deep and quiet slumber.

“May thy sleep be auspicious!” she mentally ejaculated, as she sunk on her knees by the side. “May the fell powers of disease pass away, and the active energies of health return!—Oh, omniscient
Maker

Maker of all created beings !” raising her clasped hands to Heaven—“ Gracious Consoler of affliction !—Sovereign of life and death !—Thou, who canst disperse sorrow—thou, who canst make the evils of this world disappear, and clothe every face with returning thankfulness and joy, restore an afflicted husband the wife for whom he supplicates—restore her in whom his life is bound, and whose loss would render his latter days wretched !—And to me, merciful and gracious Father, restore a more than mother ; a being, who, uninfluenced by nature, followed all her dictates, and made me grateful to thee—made me what I am !—But yet,” she continued, as her eyes rested on the dame, “ if the hour is come—if thou permittest her to remain no longer with us—if the period of dissolution appointed by thy unerring wisdom is arrived, aid her with thine infinite bounties—soothe her in the awful struggles of death—and for us, pardon our repinings, and by thy divine consolation so moderate
our

our affliction, that we offend thee not by despair !”

Such was the prayer of Rosalthe, and such the influence which piety has over virtue, that her heart insensibly lost its load of sorrow ; she felt she could perform her duty—she felt she could even witness the last efforts of the soul escaping its prison. Such is the power of religion upon the minds of men ; it raises them above calamity ; it fills them with sacred fervour, with never-failing comfort ; it disperses the dark mists of error, and expands the mind with light and truth ; it is like the rising moon, which chases from the horizon the gloom of night—its path is glory—its road is happiness !

The sun was retiring behind the mountains, and reflecting on the clouds a glowing red, when Rosalthe quitted the cottage, for the purpose of revisiting the hermitage of Father Anselmo. She found him at his
evening's

evening's repast—serenity shone upon his brow, temperance marked his table; his food was the produce of the mountain—his drink the liquid crystal of the brook. Rosalthe made known the purport of her visit, and a few moments saw them descending the rock, conveying the healing balm of medicine, the produce of the holy father's laboratory.

“Come, lean upon my arm,” said Rosalthe; “the path is rugged, and nature has made it almost inaccessible.”

“Dost thou think it a support, daughter?” enquired the hermit.

“It is but a feeble one,” replied Rosalthe, “but we sometimes hear of the firm oak falling, rooted up by the blast, whilst the sickly reed, pliable and unbroken, weathers out the tempest.”

“True,” resumed the anchorite; “the rock which crushes the lion, injureth not the ant. In all things may we read the glory of the Omniscient—in all things may we
we

we read our own unworthiness, and his mercy!—Who dares say, to-morrow I will reap the fruits of my labour?—Who dares rely upon their own wisdom?—Let them look around, and every scene will speak the fall of man. The trees are disrobed of their verdure, the flowers wither on their stalks, but the returning season expands the young shoots, covering them anew with leaves; vegetation again smiles, and fresh flowers blossom from the seeds which the wind had scattered. Man alone dies—man closes his eyes, and he is gone for ever—his days flee as a shadow, and the world, alas! can know him no more. But he dies to live,” continued Father Anselmo, raising his eyes in grateful adoration to Heaven; “he passes from sorrow to bliss, from pain to immortality.”

Rosalthe imbibed the holy enthusiasm; she beheld the pursuits of this world as transitory and perishable; and as she gazed on the bending form, on the venerable

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countenance, on the bleached locks of the hermit, every sensation of love, fear, sorrow, gave way to reverence: she could have sank upon her knees, she could have worshipped him as an inhabitant of Heaven, and thought herself secured from calamity in the certainty of his protection.

Such were their ideas, such their conversation, when the approach of a stranger recalled them to themselves. His eyes were bent on the ground, his walk slow, his arms folded; he paused when he reached the favourite seat of Rosalthe, and with a heavy sigh threw herself on it. The moonbeams played upon his countenance, and his dark plume waved in the breeze of evening; the curling waves rippled at the foot of the rock, and the sea-mew shrieked as she dipped her wing in the ocean.

Rosalthe started—she remembered the figure—the features were also familiar to her; in an instant she recognized the person

son who had once, on the same spot, addressed her—whose deep dejection, whose apparent melancholy had excited her compassion. The stranger beheld not their approach; he sighed as though his heart was breaking; and, ever and anon, his clenched hand was struck against his forehead.

“It shall be so!” at length he exclaimed, and again he sank into silence.

Father Anselmo beheld him with pity; the errors of his past life arose to his mind, and a tear of regret trickled down his furrowed cheek. “Poor youth!” he mentally ejaculated; “perhaps thy heart now struggles with the last efforts of expiring virtue—perhaps thou art tottering on an abyss of vice, art preparing long years of misery, for which endless remorse, eternal repentance, can alone atone. Oh that I could save thee!—that I could point out the woeful consequences of sin, and teach

thee that to be virtuous is to be really happy !”

Whilst yet he gazed upon the object of his solicitude, his foot struck a loose fragment of the rock, and sent it rolling down the declivity ; the noise aroused the attention of the stranger—he looked up, and beheld Rosalthe, glowing with health and beauty—he sprung from his seat—he gazed eagerly upon her—his eyes sparkled with animation—he would have spoken, but the presence of the hermit restrained him. At length, turning hastily, “ Father !” he exclaimed, “ if we see a dove falling into the snare of a kite, should we not stretch an arm to save her ?”

“ Humanity is part of our creed, my son,” replied the anchorite.

“ And if we rescue that dove,” resumed the stranger, “ if we save her from destruction, should we not claim her for our own ?—should we not wear her in our bosoms ?”

“ If

“If she has gratitude,” said the hermit, gravely, “she will not flee thee; if she has not, wherefore wouldst thou restrain her?”

“But supposing the dove to be unconscious of her danger,” eagerly asked the youth; “supposing that she attends not to her deliverer, what then is to be his recompence?”

“Ah, my son, suffer not thy reason to be blinded by the delusive sophistry of love.”

“Father!” interrupted the stranger.

“Like the enwreathed serpent,” solemnly pursued the hermit, “when it compresses the heart, it destroys its energies, it cramps its powers—But the evening wears away, and thy eyes, my daughter,” turning to Rosalthe, “speak tender impatience and anxious solicitude. We will pursue our road. But ere I go, upon the summit of this rock,” addressing the stranger, “is erected a cell, marked by the precious sign of the cross; repair thither, my

son, and if the counsels of Father Anselmo can aid thee—if his example can warn thee, command them freely.”

“How mysterious are the manners of that youth!” said Rosalthe, as they proceeded towards the cottage; “methinks he seems as though the sanity of his mind had yielded to the force of sorrow.”

“Thou art a novice in the ways of the world, my child,” replied the anchorite, smiling, “else wouldst thou penetrate the flimsy veil of his metaphor. ’Tis love which guides his actions—I watched his eyes—thou art young—I am old—and experience is a lesson I have bought. Now mark me, Rosalthe; go not alone to the rock, for the dove may struggle in the snare of the kite, and a deliverer may not be at hand to rescue her.”

They had now reached the garden-gate, and were joined by Dusseldorf, who had long and impatiently watched their appearance. Agatha was better; the lethargic stupor

stupor of the morning was dissipated, and she could now distinguish the objects around her. From this day, Father Anselmo was the physician, Rosalthe the nurse, Dusseldorf the comforter; they all exerted their powers, they all contributed to lighten her sufferings. But nature did more for Agatha—nature struggled with the complaint—nature surmounted the disease—and in one short week, by restoring her to the enjoyment of health, took from her friends the fatigue of long watching, and the pain of anxious expectation.

Attributing every blessing to its only source, the Author of all good, the dame, assisted by the arm of Rosalthe, repaired to the chapel of St. Florensia, to pour out, at the foot of the broken altar, the offerings of a heart overflowing with pious gratitude.

“It is from thee, great and wise Creator,” she would exclaim, “that our healths, our comforts, flow!—It is thou

who watcheth over us!—It is thou who guardeth from us the thousand, thousand accidents that daily threaten to sever the slender thread of our existence!—Should we not then return thanks?—Should we not, when rising from the bed of sickness, praise with bended knees the divine Author of our recovery?—Yes, holy and gracious Father, receive the thanks of thy servant, for that thou hast been pleased to give her a heart to know and value thy blessings!”

Such were the reflections of Agatha on quitting the cottage, and such are the reflections of every religious mind, when from the agony of bodily pain they are restored to the comforts of enjoyment. But Rosalthe, as she approached the chapel, felt her bosom thrill with a powerful sensation; she looked towards the ruin, and her cheeks glowed with the blush of hope—’twas there that Adelbert had poured forth the secrets of his breast—’twas there he had wooed her virgin heart with vows
of

of endless love, and eternal constancy. Still did his form dance before her eyes—still did the accents of his lips vibrate on her ear—still did she see him kneeling at the altar—still did she feel the pressure of his hand, when, in a faltering voice, she vowed to know no other love than the blest, the chosen Adelbert. Anxiety for the safety of her foster-mother was fled, and love, in all its tyranny, resumed its empire in her breast.

“And does he sometimes think of Rosalthe?” enquired her palpitating heart. “Does he, from the glitter and parade of grandeur, retire to the peaceful shades of Saxony?—Does he pass over the scenes of early love, of long-tried, long-cherished affection?”

Thrice had the dame pointed out the beauty of the sun's bright rays playing on the water—thrice had she waited the answer of Rosalthe, but still was she lost in

thought: at length, with a significant smile—"If the Count de Lunenberg thinks as much of the convent of St. Florensia as my poor child does of Dresden," she exclaimed, "it will not be long before he returns."

"Fie, mother!" said Rosalthe, whilst her averted eyes sought the ground.

"And fie, daughter!" laughingly resumed the dame, "to think of acting the hypocrite. No, no, Rosalthe, your face was not made for artifice; you must lose that ingenuous countenance, and that tell-tale blush, ere you think to preserve a secret. I have long seen and gloried in your mutual affection, but they are only my own words verified; for often have I foretold, as you lay a smiling infant in my arms, that your fate was not a common one."

"Indeed it was not!" replied Rosalthe, solemnly. "A poor foundling, unknown and unsought after—a stranger to parental love, to name, to birth, to family—well might you say, *it was not a common one.*"

"Now

“Now you are cruel,” said the dame, taking her hand, and looking tenderly in her face; “you know it grieves my heart to hear you mention that subject. I wish the Lady Abbess had never divulged the story, for then you would not have talked so much of gratitude—you would ever have loved me as a mother—would ever have been to me the daughter I have lost—would ever have been as the once tender, once obedient, Jacquilina.”

“And I will ever be so,” replied Rosalthe, warmly; “think me Jacquilina—think me all you wish—think me your child, and suffer me to call you mother.”

They now entered the ruin, and Rosalthe, as she passed beneath the mouldering arches, felt a secret dread creep over her; she started as the wind swept across the high weeds which flourished in the aisle—she trembled when the rooks flapped their wings in the ivy—she dared not turn her head, lest imagination should people the

distant gloom—and as she rested against the shrine of St. Florensia, she remembered her last visit to the chapel—she remembered the sigh which had reached her ear, and the voice which had pronounced her name from the sacristy.

“ Too sure, it was not fancy !” she exclaimed, as Agatha rose from her knees.

“ What was not fancy ?” enquired the dame.

“ The voice which pronounced my name from the sacristy, the last evening I visited the chapel,” replied Rosalthe.

“ A voice from the sacristy !” repeated the terrified Agatha, grasping the arm of Rosalthe, and hurrying towards the entrance. “ Holy Mary !—let us return home : how dark, how dismal the chapel looks ! Sure I saw a shadow flit by the altar !—Did it call you ?—Did it say Rosalthe ?—Perhaps it was the ghost of your mother.”

Rosalthe raised her eyes to Heaven ; her whole form trembled, and with difficulty she supported herself through the aisle. The deep silence and awful gloom of the place served but to increase her terrors, for the sun could not dart his purifying rays through the clustering ivy, and the high windows had long since been lined with the ingenious web of the spider.

“ Let us return home,” again said the dame, as a superstitious dread benumbed every feeling ; I dare not stay a moment longer—should the spectre stand before me, I——”

“ Agatha !” said a voice from the interior of the building.

Agatha shrieked, and hid her face in her hands.

“ Why so terrified ?” enquired Dusseldorf, who had come to seek them ; “ I thought safety dwelt beneath the consecrated

crated roof of religion; why then should one of her strictest votaries tremble at the very foot of the altar? Fie, Agatha!—shake off this weakness—banish these vain terrors, and believe me, the being whose actions are guided by principle, whose thoughts are dictated by virtue, need not fear, though the darkness of night surround him, and his pillow be the resting-place of a departed brother.”

Agatha ventured to look up, and as she leaned upon the arm of her husband, felt a confidence in his superior strength—a confidence which enabled her to turn towards the ruin, and with less fear to gaze upon the sacristy.

Ashamed of her own weakness, and reflecting on the words of Dusseldorf, Rosalthe lingered behind; and when with slow steps she saw her foster-parents recrossing the plain, she again entered the chapel. For many minutes she knelt at
the

the altar, and when she rose from her devotions, looked around without dismay; the consciousness of innocence was her support—she had never felt the pang of guilt, the horror of an accusing conscience—and as the light of reason dissipated the mists of superstition, her soul without one struggle recovered its native energies.

As Agatha regained her strength, the Lady Abbess grew impatient for Rosalthe's return to the convent; she dreaded lest her uncommon beauty should attract the eyes of the designing—she dreaded lest her guileless innocence should become the dupe of artifice—she remembered the fate of Jacquilina, and as she shuddered at her fall, her heart whispered, that the dwelling of Dusseldorf was not a secure retreat for the daughter of Adela. In the dame's first visit to St. Florensia, the Superior hinted her wishes, and an early day was named for Rosalthe's quitting the cottage.

The

The evening previous to her re-entering the convent, she wished to visit the rock. Dusseldorf had been to Father Anselmo's cell in the morning, and felt fatigued from the walk; Agatha, but scarcely recovered from her late illness, was fearful of the night air. The weather was inviting, and Rosalthe dreamt not of danger; and forgetful of the admonitions of the hermit, quitted the dwelling of Dusseldorf, and hastened across the plain, as the sun, retiring behind the mountains, reflected on the clouds a glowing red.

CHAP. IX.

THE cottagers, with anxious solicitude, awaited the return of Rosalthe; hour after hour rolled slowly away, and twilight's grey mantle spread itself over the earth.

"Are you sure she went to the rock?" enquired Dusseldorf, looking eagerly from the window.

"Oh yes!" replied the dame, who was busy in preparing their evening's repast. 'Mother,' she said, as she quitted me at the garden-gate, 'to-morrow I return to the convent, and to-night I will take my farewell of the rock.' 'Do so, my child, I answered,'

answered,' and away she bounded. But why do you look so uneasy?—What can you fear?—The sweet child never injured a human being—no, not even the most worthless of insects; for often have I seen her quit the path to spare a worm. The Virgin will guard her innocence, and even through wolves and bears conduct her in safety!—Come, look cheerful; we shall see her returning presently, with cheeks blooming as the rose."

"I hope so—with all my soul I hope so!" fervently repeated Dusseldorf.

"I dare say she is thinking of the Count Adelbert, and perceives not how the moments fly," resumed Agatha. "Love," looking archly at her husband, "alters us strangely."

"It does indeed," replied the veteran. "If the Count was at the castle I should feel satisfied, but Rosalthe alone never remained so long from the cottage."

"True," said the dame, "but I tell you she is thinking of the Count. Many years
have

“have passed over our heads,” she continued, smiling on her good man, “since hours were as minutes to us, and yet I can remember, when you was staying with the old gardener, your father, at Lunenberg Castle, and I lived with my mother in this very cottage, that we have met at the foot of the rock, and staid so long, that I have been afraid to return home alone, and you have brought me to the garden-gate, and——Holy St. Mary!” shrieked Agatha, covering her eyes with her hand, “what a flash of lightning!”

Dusseldorf started.

“I will go and seek Rosalthe!” he exclaimed, snatching his hat, and rushing from the cottage.

Agatha impatiently awaited his return; she watched him from the window, and when her eyes lost sight of the object of her

her affection, walked mechanically to the fire.

“ I fear—I fear all is not right; the dismal boding of the screech-owl, which disturbed my rest last night, is verified. Ah, Rosalthe!—dear and beloved child!—would to Heaven I had kept thee at the cottage!”

One moment she gazed wistfully towards the cliff, the next she petitioned the saints to protect her darling.

“ It is near eighteen years ago,” she mournfully sighed, “ on such a night as this, when the elements seemed to clash with each other—when the rain poured down in torrents, and the wind whistled round our dwelling, that I received Rosalthe to my arms; and when her frantic mother died, I looked upon her as a gift from Heaven, and thanked the bountiful donor

donor for the blessed compensation he had sent us for the desertion of my poor, my beloved Jacquilina. And now, alas ! all my sorrows are renewed," bursting into tears, and starting at the loud peal of thunder which rocked the cottage to its foundation.

Again she looked from the window, and again turned despondently away. At length the well-known footsteps of Dusseldorf sounded on the threshold; Agatha hastened to meet him—he was alone—his countenance pale, and his garments drenched with rain.

"Alas, Rosalthe!—what is become of Rosalthe?" exclaimed the dame, bursting into a fresh agony of sorrow.

"I have seen," said Dusseldorf, regardless of her question—"I have seen——"

"Who? —What? —Rosalthe?" eagerly interrupted Agatha.

"Oh no, not our beloved Rosalthe! but
a being

a being who agitated my soul, not with terror, but with a sensation I cannot describe."

Agatha, with cheeks bleached with fear, looked anxiously towards him.

"When I left the cottage," pursued the veteran, "I repaired to the rock, but the object of my search was no where to be seen; supposing her to have sought shelter from the storm, I hallooed aloud—the whole shore re-echoed the name of Rosalthe, but still Rosalthe answered not my call. Overcome with apprehension, and dreading I knew not what, I hastened to the chapel; awe-struck, I paused at the foot of the hill, for the scene was tremendous—the lightning played upon the tempestuous ocean—the rain poured through the broken arches—and the thunder, rumbling over head, threatened to level man's proud distinctions with the dust. Crossing the sacristy, I entered the
nave

nave of the chapel, and beheld, kneeling before the shrine of St. Florensia, a tall figure, whose dark mantle bespoke the dress of some religious order; the flowing veil concealed her features, and her hands stretched forward were clasped in prayer."

"In the chapel, at the shrine of St. Florensia," repeated Agatha, in a voice of horror. "Blessed Virgin!—it must be the spirit of Rosalthe's mother!—The night she died, while you were attending the body to the convent, and the dear little Rosalthe lay slumbering in my arms, I remember hearing——"

"Hush, Agatha!" interrupted Dusseldorf, "this is not a time to recapitulate past events; the being I have seen is no spirit—it was warm in life as thou art, I tell thee," reading incredulity in her countenance. "I saw her move, and I heard her sigh."

"Did she speak?—Did she pronounce the name of Rosalthe?" questioned Agatha.

"No," answered Dusseldorf; "when I addressed

addressed her, she turned towards me, and uttering a kind of half-shriek, started from her knees, and fled through the chapel."

"And did you not follow her?" asked the dame.

"I could not—my strength appeared to forsake me—a sensation I never before experienced rushed to my heart, and I leant against the altar for support. I have stood undaunted in the field of battle," continued the veteran, after a pause, and drawing his hand across a deep scar on his forehead; "neither do I fear supernatural agency, and yet I trembled with more than woman's weakness as the sound of her retreating steps died in silence."

"'Tis strange!—'tis very strange!" said Agatha, her head resting upon her hand: "I would not be alone in that chapel for a king's ransom. But our Rosalthe!—our poor child!—Alas, Dusseldorf!—Perhaps the spirit in the chapel——"

"Fie, Agatha!—I tell thee it was no spirit; and if it was, do'st think a spirit
would

would injure Rosalthe? But I lose time; I will go once more to the rock, and if my search is fruitless, I will hasten to Lunenberg Castle, and claim the assistance of the servants."

"Would I were young and able to accompany you," said the dame; "but my heart fails me as I listen to the pelting of the storm. Go, and bring Rosalthe—the interim shall be passed in prayers for her and your safety."

As Dusseldorf rose to depart, they were alarmed by a loud knocking at the door of the cottage.

"Perhaps it is our Rosalthe," whispered the dame, casting an expecting look at her husband, as Ulrica hastened to open the door.

The wind continued to whistle round the dwelling, and the rain still poured down in torrents.

“ Who seeks admittance ? ” enquired Dusseldorf, in an audible voice.

“ ’Tis I—’tis Adelbert ; my good friend, open the door, or I shall be drowned in the rain.”

“ Our young Lord returned ! ” exclaimed Agatha, in a voice of joy ; “ Heaven bless him !—Perhaps he comes to bring us intelligence of Rosalthe.”

“ Here is a sad night, Dusseldorf,” said the Count, as he entered ; “ scarce an hour has elapsed since I arrived at the castle, but hearing from the housekeeper that Rosalthe was at the cottage, and on the eve of returning to the convent, I could not remain until the morning without seeing her.”

“ Have you not seen Rosalthe then ? ” fearfully enquired the dame.

“ Seen her ! ” repeated Adelbert, in a tone of trepidation. “ No—where is she ? ”

Agatha, clasping her hands, burst into tears.

“ All

“ All my hopes are fled !” she sobbed ;
“ for when I heard your voice, I pictured
her safe under your protection.”

Adelbert turned pale, and grasping the
arm of Dusseldorf, listened to a recital
which froze him with horror. He paused
for a moment, his hand pressed upon his
forehead ; at length, with a palsied start—
“ Rosalthe lost !” he exclaimed ; “ Ro-
salthe exposed to the fury of the storm,
and I standing here inactive !—I will search
for her—I will fly to the rock, nor return
until every cavity is explored !”

“ And I will share thy perils, my Lord,”
said Dusseldorf ; “ Rosalthe is as dear to
my heart as though I had been her father.”

“ Ah !—art thou not the father of Ro-
salthe ?” enquired the agitated Adelbert.

“ Oh, no !” said Agatha. “ Rosalthe is
not the offspring of a cottager ; Heaven
entrusted her to our love—for on such a
night as this her frantic mother sought a

a refuge in our dwelling, and on the following morning died."

"All-gracious, all-mysterious Power!" ejaculated Adelbert, "who in the hour of danger preserved the tender babe of the hapless Adela, still watch her with thy protecting care—guard her from affliction and sorrow—restore the injured orphan to the right of her inheritance, and in thy own good time punish the guilty."

"Adela!" repeated the astonished Dusseldorf; "dost thou know the mother of Rosalthe?"

"I cannot answer thee," replied Adelbert; "I must away—perhaps at this moment Rosalthe sorrowing calls upon my name."

"*We* must away," said the veteran, approaching the door.

"No, my friend," answered Adelbert, "the danger shall be all my own. Thou art old, and thy constitution could not brave a night like this; it requires strength,
my

my good Dusseldorf, to stand against the wind—besides, there is one,” pointing to the weeping Agatha, “who requires all thy care—whose very looks beseech thee to spare her life in thine. My whole soul is in the pursuit; youth, health, strength, are on my side, and Rosalthe is the prize that can make these blessings valuable.”

“Heaven prosper the undertaking, and restore Rosalthe in safety to our arms!” said Dusseldorf, as Adelbert rushed from the cottage.

“Amen,” piously pronounced the dame, forming on her bosom the precious sign of the cross.

Scarce had an hour elapsed ere Dusseldorf regretted not having accompanied Adelbert in his search.

“It is a dark night—perhaps the Count may lose his way, and wander in the intricacies of the forest—sometimes we hear

of banditti," he continued, walking hastily to the window.

Agatha replied not; she sat musing near the fire, her whole thoughts, her whole heart occupied by the fate of Rosalthe.

"Should he fall beneath the murderer's sword," resumed Dusseldorf, pacing the chamber, "how shall we bear the tale to the Baron de Lunenberg?—And the Lady Abbess too, how will she support the loss of her beloved child?—Merciful Father!—when will our afflictions cease?—Oh, day of woe!—Twice bitter, twice eventful day!"

"Well may you say *eventful*," sobbed Agatha; "six-and-twenty years this day, Jacquilina deserted her home, and left her parents age to sorrow. Who would have thought then, Dusseldorf, we should have lived to see this night?"

"God is all sufficient!" exclaimed her
afflicted

afflicted husband, with pious fervour. "He upholds the widow's heart, and supports the orphan's rights; he wantonly punishes not his creatures—his ways are wisdom, his judgments truth—he worketh ever by secret springs, and frequently rescues us from scenes of misery, which we think insupportable and inevitable."

"Never, never shall I forget the evening Jacquilina left us," sighed the dame; "the elements were serene—the moon shone mildly—all nature slumbered, save her wretched parents, and in their hearts the storm raged turbulent as it does at this moment. How many dreadful images did we form!—How often did we indulge the pleasing hope of her return!—How often did we rue the hour which gave us a daughter!"

"The blessing which we so fondly cherished, so eagerly clasped, proved our bane," interrupted Dusseldorf, "and convinced us, fatally convinced us of the mutability of all worldly dependance. A

second time have we rested our hopes on the same perishable foundation, and a second time are those hopes involved in despair."

"Say not so," said Agatha, taking the hand of her husband; "Jacquilina left us voluntarily, but Rosalthe's heart never wandered from the friends of her youth."

"But we have lost her," sighed Dusseldorf, as the tears flowed down his cheeks, "and we know not to what misery this very moment may expose her."

"I trust she will yet return!" murmured Agatha, struggling to recover her composure; "I trust she will live to restore us to happiness, to reward all our cares!"

"Heaven grant she may!" replied the veteran.

"Perhaps," exclaimed the dame, as a momentary gleam of joy glanced over her features, "she is at the cell of Father Anselmo. Who knows," and her mind, like a drowning wretch struggling with the waves, and clinging to every slender bough, seized

seized eagerly on the distant prospect of hope, “who knows, but driven there for shelter, she now impatiently waits the return of morning.”

Dusseldorf started from his chair, and acknowledging the possibility, determined instantly to repair to the cell of the recluse; but, alas! disappointment awaited him—the hermit was from home, and with an aching heart the good old soldier returned to the cottage.

“Despair and sorrow awaits us!” he exclaimed, meeting the anxious Agatha at the door. “Alas! my search has been fruitless, and our best laid plans of happiness are rendered abortive.”

Again did they return to the parlour—again did they seat themselves by the fire—another hour passed heavily away, and the clock struck twelve.

“Holy mother!” ejaculated Agatha, “it is midnight, and the Count not yet returned. Never, never shall we see our Rosalthe more.”

Dusseldorf groaned.

“Would to Heaven we had warned him of the chapel,” pursued the dame; “the spectre you saw kneeling at the shrine of St. Florensia——”

“Hush!” interrupted Dusseldorf, “methought I heard a noise.”

“It was but the wind,” replied Agatha.

“That I will ascertain,” said the veteran, approaching the door.

“Ah, do not again leave me!” implored the dame; “my heart is sick with many sorrows, and was I to behold the spirit, terror too sure would kill me.”

“Hast thou ever injured a human being?” demanded Dusseldorf.

“No, never!” answered Agatha; “but yet——”

“What

“What then canst thou fear?” interrupted her husband. “The guilty dread the darkness of night, but the innocent carry a guard in their own breasts, worth a whole host of defenders.”

Agatha's eyes followed the veteran; he looked impatiently from the door, but no object could be discerned through the surrounding gloom—no sound heard, save the hollow whistling of the blast, and the distant roar of the ocean.

“’Twas indeed but the wind,” said the disappointed Dusseldorf, closing the door and returning to the parlour; “and still must we linger under the painful pressure of suspense!—still must we endure the horrors of mystery!—Alas! I tremble for the safety of the Count—I fear, lest eager in the pursuit, he should have quitted the path, and have fallen headlong down some steep and craggy precipice. Prophetic Heaven, what accumulated woes are ours!”

and again his hands were clasped in prayer, and again his eyes were raised in pious fervour.

“If I had seen thee slumbering in death, Rosalthe,” sighed the dame, “methinks my heart would have yielded to the dispensations of Providence ; I should have known thou wert happy—I should have known thou wert placed beyond the cares and afflictions of this world—I should have known that thy virtues were recompenced, and that our sorrows were but selfish—my tears could have moistened the sod that covered thee, and my hands should have strewed spring’s choicest flowers upon thy grave!—But to know thee lost—to fear thy innocence exposed to danger—to hear the pitiless peltings of the storm, when, perhaps, thy head cannot find a shelter, rives my distracted bosom, and fills me with anguish. Oh, Dusseldorf!—beloved fellow-sufferer!—dear afflicted husband!—in this new, this agonizing calamity, is the loss of our Jacquilina renewed.”

“Despair

“Despair not, Agatha,” fervently answered Dusseldorf; “God readeth every heart, and his impartial eyes wandereth over all the vast infinitude of space. At his command the furious winds arise—at his command the blasting tempests roar, and sea and air rise in wild commotion; but at his nod, calmed are the world of waters, and stilled are the boisterous winds. Let us bear in mind life’s human wretchedness!—Let us bear in mind man’s blind, man’s ignorant, man’s weak estate!—Let us remember, that did not Providence sometimes withhold the mercies we implore, we should reap ruin in our own petitions!—Let us trust in one whose promise never fails, let us trust in one whose power is immutable!”

CHAP. X.

WHEN Adelbert left the cottage in search of Rosalthe, he fled swiftly across the plain ; the rain fell unheeded, and the lightning, illumining the earth, served as a conductor. Rosalthe, cold and terrified, seeking shelter in some deep cavern, was the object his imagination pourtrayed. Rosalthe alone, and perhaps fearfully calling upon Adelbert, he fondly sighed, as he reached the rock—but no Rosalthe gladdened his sight.

Cold blew the wind, and a heavy darkness hung on all around ; the roaring
Baltic

Baltic lashed the white-clift shore, and the thunder died awfully in distance. With folded arms he bent over her favourite seat; for, alas! no vestige of her having been there remained—no auspicious clue to guide his future search. Again did the shore resound with the name of Rosalthe.

“’Tis Adelbert who calls,” he vociferated, but his own voice returned in echoes upon his ear. Dispirited and unhappy he rested against the rock, now fixing his eyes on Heaven, now gazing anxiously around. A vivid flash of lightning disclosed the foaming torrent rolling down the side of the mountain, and from the amazing swell which the heavy rain had occasioned, carrying away the overhanging shrubs and small trees which grew on its borders. The wooden bridge on the summit, and the cross, marking the hermitage of Father Anselmo, were alike rendered visible, and in a second were again involved in darkness.

“Perhaps,”

“Perhaps,” thought Adelbert, as the possibility darted across his brain, “the good anchorite is now endeavouring to inspire the timid heart of my Rosalthe with courage!—Perhaps, trembling with terror, she may there have sought shelter from the storm!”

Scarce was the thought formed, ere ascending the rock, he rushed across the bridge, and knocked loudly at the door of the cell; but no answer was returned—no cheerful ray gleaming from the interior, spoke the welcome of hospitality to the way-worn traveller. Raising the latch he threw open the door; the grave’s deep silence prevailed, and the chambers, the refectory, the chapel, were alike deserted. Overcome with disappointment and sorrow, Adelbert sank upon the rushy couch of the devotee, and his hand with difficulty supported the weight of his aching head. Images of horror danced before his eyes, and a thousand foreboding thoughts filled his

his mind; sometimes Rosalthe, pale and dying, left him no room for hope—sometimes, in the melancholy pauses of the wind, he would wildly start, as fancy wafted her piercing shrieks upon his ear. Yielding to the impulse of despair, he arraigned the decrees of fate, and in the madness of the moment, accused Providence of cruelty and injustice.

Let the stoic, whose heart never throbbed with love's tender passion, smile at his delirium!—it is to the innocent, rich in the gift of sensibility, I appeal—it is from them I would know whether happiness is not incompatible with the being, deprived, in the fancied moment of security, of the only object who could soothe affliction, administer delight, or brighten the gloomy prospect of despair!

But scarce had the murmur passed the lips of Adelbert, when, trembling at his own impiety, he raised his clasped hands to
Heaven,

Heaven, and, in the ardour of devotion, implored for his Rosalthe the protection of his omniscient Creator. Slow and mournful he quitted the hermitage, and as he lingered on the bridge—"Rosalthe, my betrothed bride!" he exclaimed, "where art thou hid, that my affection cannot find you?—Perhaps at the chapel of St. Florenzia, where blushing you vowed to own no other love than the blest, the chosen Adelbert."

The thought was electricity; like an arrow shot from a bow he bounded across the plain, and in a few moments came in sight of the chapel; anxiously he looked towards it—a stream of light issuing from the ruined arches shone faintly through the grove of cypress, peopling the deep gloom with a thousand [strange and fantastic images. He paused not an instant; already in idea did he press Rosalthe to his bosom—did he gently chide her for the uneasiness her desertion had occasioned.

Big

Big with the promised joy he sprung forward, but stumbled over a loose fragment of stone which lay at the entrance ; immediately the light vanished, and the face of nature was hid in impenetrable darkness.

“ Fear not, Rosalthe !” he exclaimed, on reaching the centre of the aisle, “ it is thy Adelbert who seeks thee, returned on love’s swift wings, again to receive thy vows at the foot of the broken altar.”

Fearfully he awaited a reply, but the same deep silence prevailed. With a beating heart he once more called on Rosalthe, and, as before, his hopes closed in disappointment.

“ Who art thou then,” enquired Adelbert, “ who thus hideth thyself in darkness ?—for sure am I that I saw a light as I approached the ruin. If thou seeketh shelter from the storm, speak ; or, if like me thou seeketh what is dearer than life, pity
my

my suspense, and tell me if Rosalthe lingers within these walls?"

A broken sigh sounded from the shrine of St. Florensia. Adelbert started, and extending his arm to grope his way, grasped one of the marble figures which decorated the sides of the chapel; a deadly panic seized upon his soul, a cold damp bedewed his features—the first impulse was flight, but his knees trembled beneath their burden, and he rested against the dripping wall for support. Momentary was the terror, for reflection and courage returned.

“Alas, how weak is human nature!” he exclaimed. “How little ought we to boast of our strength, when a casual and trifling incident, by throwing us off our guard, destroys the barrier of resolution, and renders us the yielding slaves of fear!—Why did I falter?—What should I dread?—Does not the same Power protect me in the shadow of night, as when the sun enlivens earth’s

earth's verdant landscape with his rays?—Does not the Being who directs the thunder to pass harmless over our heads, sometimes smite us in the hour of fancied safety?—*The race is not to the swift*, neither is *the battle to the strong*, for the Power who can educe good out of apparent evil, can, from the lowest abyss of despair, raise us to thankfulness and joy."

Ashamed of his weakness, he approached the shrine. "It was here Rosalthe first owned she loved!" he exclaimed; "it was here, with blushing cheeks and downcast eyes, she listened to the ardour of my passion, and yet dismayed I would fly the blessed spot!—Here then, in this awful place, beneath this consecrated roof, still ringing with the clash of elements, still resisting the devastation of time, I call the omnipotent Creator of nature to witness my vow, never to plight my faith to any other than Rosalthe, nor ever to know
quiet

quiet while her fate is involved in mystery."

"Thy vow is registered in Heaven!" replied a solemn voice.

Adelbert sank upon his knees, and rested his head against the shrine; a light footstep seemed to pass him—he started, he listened, the sound died in distance, and the silence of death again prevailed.

"Strange, inexplicable being!" he at length articulated, as his hand pressed upon his forehead; "secure in darkness, thou eludest my search, and with chilling apathy mocketh my misery—speak, if compassion dwelleth in thy heart—speak, if the joys of this world are dear unto thee—tell me whether thou knowest the object of my love?—Tell me whether my affianced bride, my Rosalthe, the supposed daughter of the peasant Dusseldorf, rests in safety?" He paused, but no answer being returned —"Tell

—“Tell me,” he resumed, with the wild fervour of frenzy, “tell me if sorrow has bleached the roses on her cheeks?—If death has stiffened her matchless form?—If her soul, mingling with its kindred angels, now looks down upon her lover?—Tell me,” and he clasped his uplifted hands, “if on this earth I shall ever again behold her?”

The shrill whistling of the wind alone sounded on his ear, and his heart seemed to sink with foreboding sadness.

“Dark and hidden is thy fate, Rosalthe,” he continued, groping his way towards the entrance of the chapel; “no auspicious ray gladdened the hour of thy nativity—no cheerful dawn proclaimed the promised bliss of a brilliant day. Thy mother, the hapless victim of tyranny and persecution, wandered a wretched fugitive from the dwelling of her ancestors, and seeking refuge in the humble cottage of Dusseldorf, left

left thee a prey to the incertitude of doubt, the horror of mystery."

Such were his reflections as he recrossed the plain; and though the lightning no longer glared, the rain no longer fell, yet the moon, obscured by an impenetrable cloud, shed not one genial ray to gild his dreary path. At length he reached the cottage, and with the breathless impatience of despair knocked loudly at the door; a light beaming from a window in the chamber of Rosalthe filled him with momentary hope—it was possible she might have returned—it was possible that with tender anxiety she now watched the lingering moments of his absence. Again he knocked, the light vanished from the window, and the door was presently opened by the cottagers. Alas! no Rosalthe met his view; the eyes of Agatha were filled with tears, and grief was stamped on the features of Dusseldorf. Pale, trembling, Adelbert rushed into the parlour, his cloak still dripping

ping with rain, his hair dishevelled, and the dark plume in his hat hanging broken over his face.

“I have sought Rosalthe, but cannot find her!” he exclaimed, gazing wildly at the old people. “From the rock I visited the hermitage of the holy Anselmo, from thence I repaired to the chapel. Why dost thou shudder, dame?—it could not hurt me—the darkness of night hid it from my sight—with impunity it mocked my sufferings, and when I sought it, coward like it fled.”

“Alas! my Lord, what mean you?” questioned the dame.

“Mean!” resumed Adelbert, with increasing wildness, “the being whose midnight vigils are kept in the chapel of St. Florensia!”

“Blessed Virgin!” ejaculated the terrified Agatha.

“Ah! dost thou know it?—Perhaps,” and he started from the chair on which he

had sunk, "it has robbed me of my Rosalthe. Let us go," grasping the arm of Dusseldorf; "with lights let us search the ruin—perhaps," and his voice faltered, "we may find her breathless form—perhaps her head now rests on the step of the broken altar. Would thou had my heart for thy pillow, love!—If thou couldst hear how it beats, it would awaken thee."

"Compose thy agitation," said Dusseldorf, in soothing accents; "this night let me prevail on thee to take repose, and in the morning, invigorated and refreshed, we will renew our search."

"No, no," replied Adelbert, "repose shall not reach my eyes, or comfort my heart—I will fly o'er the world to recover my betrothed bride!—Man's feeble power shall not restrain me—as a straw I will snap every barrier, and fulfil my oath—for I have sworn at the foot of the broken altar never to know quiet whilst my Rosalthe's fate is involved in mystery! 'Thy
vow

now is registered in Heaven,' a deep sepulchral voice pronounced from the shrine of St. Florensia."

Dusseldorf looked anxiously towards him, whilst Agatha, trembling with a thousand nameless fears, gazed at the Count, then at her husband, and then at the Count again.

"The light had vanished," continued Adelbert, "and I saw not the figure, but the words sank deep on the tablets of my memory; it was as a voice from Heaven—the sound was soft as the dulcimer to my ears—it seemed to bid me cherish Rosalthe—it seemed to say, hope will arise from disappointment, sorrow will awaken into joy—it seemed to say, the clouds of anguish will vanish, and the sun of happiness return."

"Propitious harbinger!" fervently exclaimed Dusseldorf.

"It seemed to say," resumed Adelbert, and his eyes, glaring with the terrifying

fire of frenzy, were fixed on the veteran, "heed not a father's ambition—heed not the empty honours of the world—persevere, and the peerless *maid of Saxony* shall yet crown thy love!"

"St. Mary fulfil the prediction!" sobbed the dame; "but, alas! I fear Rosalthe will never return to tell the tale of her disappearance."

"Dost thou believe her dead?" groaned Adelbert; "dost thou believe the banditti of the mountains have murdered the rose of beauty?—Is that bosom, white as the spotless snow descending from Heaven, pierced by the sword of the assassin?—Are those eyes, brilliant as the radiant star of evening, closed in death?—Shall I no more with delight and wonder behold her virtues?—Shall I no more listen to the sage counsels of age, flowing in mild accents from the lips of beauty?—Oh, my father, thou hast destroyed my peace—thou hast destroyed Rosalthe—thou hast destroyed thy own happiness—for her me-
mory

mory shall be my bride, her grave shall be my resting-place!—Let us go, old man—let us seek it; the violet grows at the head—the green moss peeps around it—the snow-drop, the modest emblem of chastity, flourisheth on her bosom—and the rose, heavy with the pearly dew, like tears of pity in the eyes of innocence, hangs bending o’er it. Let us go, for there I will watch the long night through, and when the morning dawns I will kneel me down, and pray for thee, my father!”

Dusseldorf, trembling for the safety of the Count, endeavoured by every argument to prevail on him to remain at the cottage; but his words were as chaff scattered before the wind. Anxiety, fatigue, and distress, had already produced a raging fever, which, fixing on the brain, rendered him the sport of every wild and impracticable whim. One moment he was for seeking Rosalthe at the convent, the next found him eager to revisit the chapel, and

then, quick as succeeding thought, imagination encompassed the whole world.

“Not a corner shall be left unsearched!” he would exclaim; “I will find thee, Rosalthe—I will rescue thee, though thousands should bar my passage, and every aspect threaten death!—This very instant I will go,” hastening to the door, and endeavouring to shake off the feeble hold of Dusseldorf; “think not to detain me—I tell thee, when next I enter this cottage, Rosalthe shall be my bride.”

“Whither, my Lord, art thou going?” enquired the trembling Agatha.

“First to the castle,” he replied, “and then to—to—Dresden.”

“Suffer me to accompany thee,” imploringly petitioned Dusseldorf; “remember, my Lord,” reading denial in the countenance of Adelbert, “I have guarded the infancy of Rosalthe—I have watched her innocence, and upheld her youth—remember to my heart she is dear as the

darling treasure of a father—she is my age's comfort—she is my only stay, save Agatha and Heaven.” The voice of Dusseldorf faltered, and the ready tear stole unchecked down his cheek.

“Come then,” said Adelbert, “let us away—let us hasten to the castle;” and passing his arm through the veteran's, quitted the cottage, and dragged him unresisting across the plain. But his strength seemed to fail as he approached the castle; thrice did he totter, and thrice did he pause to recover breath. At length they entered the hall, but ere they had crossed it, Adelbert raised his hand to his forehead, and with a heavy sigh sank senseless on the shoulder of Dusseldorf. Sorrow and consternation was spread around—every heart sympathized in the woes of the Count—he was known but to be beloved, but to be revered. A thousand vague surmises in an instant took rise, and love, miseries too frequent concomitant, was already whispered as the fatal source of his disorder.

Long was it ere life's warm tide reflowed to his heart!—Long was it ere the terrifying aspect of death was chased from his countenance!—The spirits of his afflicted domestics drooped, and grief and fear had bleached the cheeks of the anxious Dusseldorf. Rosalthe was the name he first articulated, whilst his eyes in every direction shot the penetrating glance of frenzy; but his voice was faint, and his efforts feeble; no longer did he start from the bed—no longer did he attempt to quit the chamber—he felt his weakness, and reclined unresisting—now in pathetic accents supplicating the mild spirit of Rosalthe, now raving on the ambition of his father, and deprecating it as the source of all his anguish.

Painful was the task of conveying to the Baron the information of his son's danger, but the dread of his dissolution subdued every other fear, and early in the morning an express was sent to Dresden.

Dusseldorf,

Dusseldorf, drooping beneath the weight of sorrow, repaired to the convent of St. Florensia, not with the hope of there finding Rosalthe, but to acquaint the community with the fearful tale of her disappearance. His courage failed as he approached the gate; for, alas! he knew not in what words to announce the misfortune. The Abbess met him with a smile—"Alone!" she said, as he entered the parlour; "this is the day for Rosalthe's return—indeed I cannot admit of an excuse—why did you not bring her?"

"Alas!—Alas!" sighed Dusseldorf, bursting into tears.

"Oh, that foreboding look!" exclaimed the Abbess, grasping the arm of Dusseldorf; "tell me all—suspense will kill me—my child, ah!—what of my child?"

"Rosalthe is——"

"Dead!" shrieked the Abbess.

"Heaven knows," resumed Dusseldorf; "but Rosalthe is lost."

"Lost!"

“Lost!” repeated the agitated Superior.
“When?—Where?—How?”

“Last night she quitted the cottage to visit the rock,” replied Dusseldorf, “and since then she has not been heard of.”

“All-gracious Heaven!” ejaculated the Abbess, “my tender Rosalthe lost!—My darling exposed to the horrors of the storm!—Ah! wherefore,” and the tears chased each other down her cheek, “are the woes of the wretched Beatrice entailed on her devoted posterity?—Yet pardon the murmur!—Pardon the being who in a moment of affliction dared to dictate it!—Great and Almighty Creator!” she piously continued, raising her clasped hands to Heaven, “who in thy mercy heedeth the contrite heart, and receiveth the prayer of the lowly penitent, guard with thy protecting care the sole relic of the departed Adela—shield her from temptation and danger—and teach her to submit unrepining to the ordination of thy wisdom. Holy Virgin!”

Virgin!" resumed the Abbess, after a long and painful pause, "what a dark iniquitous scene is spread before me! Oh, Rosalthe!—ill-fated daughter of a wretched mother!—dear lost victim of love and credulity!"

"Alas! what meanest thou, Lady?" anxiously enquired Dusseldorf.

"Could the eye of affection be blind to the approach of the deceiver?" mournfully sighed the Abbess; "could the mantling blush, the tender sigh, elude thy observation, mistaken Dusseldorf?"

"Explain thyself, holy mother," importuned the agitated veteran; "for even now my heart solves not the import of thy words."

"Go to the Count de Lunenberg, and ask for Rosalthe," replied the Abbess. "Tell him, from his hands St. Florensia will claim his victim; tell him, neither rank, power, or subterfuge, can shield him from the wrath of offended Heaven!"

"Thy suspicions are groundless," answered

swered Dusseldorf; “the Count, sinking under the load of affliction which the disappearance of Rosalthe has occasioned, now at Lunenberg Castle is extended on the bed of sickness, labouring beneath the alarming frenzy of delirium—now fondly calling on her name—now execrating the being who has torn her from him.”

“May Heaven pardon me then!” sighed the Superior, as doubt and incertitude once more filled her mind. “Has no strange step, no suspicious observer, hovered round the cottage?—Has no eye gazed with rapturous delight on the orphan’s beauty?—Answer me, my friend, for even now methinks the hand of treachery has torn her from us.”

“Buried in obscurity,” replied Dusseldorf, “no eye, save the Count’s, beheld her merit—no heart but his, beneath the humble thatch of our dwelling, could picture so rich a treasure. Ah, no! never could the ingenuous Rosalthe have concealed

cealed the secret—never, beneath an assumed contentment, have harboured a wish so ungrateful.”

“ You mistake me,” rejoined the Superior ; “ no thought have I breathed, no idea have I formed, so prejudicial to the honour of my child. We saw not her struggles—we heard not her shrieks ; perhaps, when forcibly torn from the rock, her streaming eyes were turned towards the cottage, with the last aching, lingering, glance of agony ; perhaps her faltering lips called upon thy name in the vain efforts of distraction, but her supplications reached not thine ear, and a stranger to her danger, thou was not near to rescue her.”

Dusseldorf, raising his full eyes to Heaven, exclaimed—“ Great and mysterious Providence ! who to confound the daring scrutiny, to perplex and humble the pride of human wisdom, and exercise the faith of all-presuming man, hast in darkness involved thy decrees, clear but this doubt, teach but my heart to trace this awful maze, and——.”

“ Restore

“Restore Rosalthe uninjured to our arms,” interrupted the Superior.

Dusseldorf’s hands were clasped in earnest supplication; and, as with holy zeal he pronounced—“Amen,” his eyes rested on the saint-like countenance of the Abbess, now emanating with the bright glow of mild, of soul-tranquillizing religion.

END OF VOL. II.



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